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D&S
VOL. 34

USS AMERICA

CVA-66, CV-66

ALSO INCLUDES COVERAGE OF
CARRIER AIR WING ONE!



in detail & scale

Bert Kinzey

DETAIL & SCALE SERIES

The "Detail & Scale" series of publications was the first to focus its attention on the many physical details of aircraft, such as cockpit interiors, radar and avionics installations, armament, landing gear, wheel wells, and ejection seats. These details are covered more thoroughly than in any other series, and are presented in the form of close-up photography and line drawings. Special consideration is given to the detail differences between the variants and subvariants of the aircraft.

This detailed coverage is supplemented with scale drawings that show five full views. Charts and tables provide extensive amounts of technical data, making this series one of the most complete technical references on aircraft that is available.

Although a brief historical summary is always presented, it is not intended to be all inclusive. It will, however, provide the most important dates and events in the development and operational life of each aircraft.

For scale modelers, a complete modeler's section is provided that reviews all the presently available scale model kits of the aircraft, and covers the decals available for these kits. Other features such as how to do conversions and how to make kit corrections are also often included.

The "Detail & Scale" series is detailed, technical, and accurate, providing the most comprehensive coverage of this nature that is available anywhere in aviation publications.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bert Kinzey, author and president of Detail & Scale, Inc., was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1945. The following year his family moved to Blacksburg, Virginia where his father became a professor of architecture at Virginia Tech (VPI). Until he was about six years old, Bert was often frightened by the loud piston-driven military fighters that sometimes flew low over his home while he was outside playing. On more than one occasion he came running into the house extremely frightened by an aircraft that had just flown over.

His father took him to the VPI airport, where cadets were learning to fly on J-3 Piper Cubs, and arranged for him to go for a flight. Bert sat on his father's lap for a short trip around Blacksburg, and that forever ended his fear of airplanes. Later, Bert's father built a balsa and tissue model of the J-3 Cub, and Bert's interest in modeling began.

Bert's fear of aircraft soon gave way to a love of aviation, and he began scale modeling. Bert looked at modeling (and still does) not as a hobby in and of itself, but as a small facet of his overall interest



The author in the rear seat of an F-5F after returning from a Red Flag mission.

in aviation.

In 1959 his family moved to Gainesville, Florida, where his aviation interest took second place to his trumpet playing in high school. In 1964, he graduated from P.K. Yonge High School and returned to Virginia Tech specifically to fulfill his lifetime dream to be in the Virginia Tech Regimental Band—The "Highty Tighties."

Upon graduation he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army, and he spent almost eight years as an army officer. During this time he commanded a Hawk guided missile battery in Korea and later wrote and taught classes in air-power, the Soviet air threat, and air defense suppression at the Army's Air Defense School at Ft. Bliss, Texas.

In August 1976, he resigned from active duty in the Army, but his reputation as being knowledgeable in all aspects of military airpower led to a job offer as a civilian with the Department of the Army. He served in this position for four years as a "subject matter expert" in military airpower and was responsible for the development of the Army's new program on aircraft identification, the first in the world to feature dynamic simulation. During this time he started Detail & Scale as a part-time business to provide detailed reference material on military aircraft.

Detail & Scale became so successful that Bert resigned from his position with the Army to devote full time to his new company. Since then he has written several books as well as articles for several magazines. He is also an avid modeler and member of the International Plastic Modelers Society (IPMS). In July 1982, he was presented with a special award by IPMS/USA in recognition for his contributions to the society. He is also a member of the American Aviation Historical Society, and the Aviation and Space Writers Association.

As a youngster who feared airplanes, it is ironic that Bert should now be so involved with aviation. He is a licensed pilot, and lives with his wife, Linda, and their two children, Jan and Chip, in Peachtree City, Georgia, near Atlanta.

USS AMERICA

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in detail & scale

Bert Kinzey

KALMBACH  **BOOKS**

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England

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A very special word of thanks is expressed to LT Ken Braithwaite, the public affairs officer aboard AMERICA, for his help, patience, and kindness.

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Front cover: A beautiful aerial view illustrates USS AMERICA as she appeared in 1987 with Carrier Air Wing One aboard. Note that the F/A-18 Hornet had yet to replace the A-7E at that time. (USS AMERICA)

Rear cover: Details of the stern are visible in this view taken from behind the carrier while she was underway. (USS AMERICA)

INTRODUCTION



This head-on view illustrates the AMERICA's enormous size. Many details of the ship are visible to include the Sea Sparrow launcher on the starboard side and the Phalanx system on the port side. Note the arrangement of the anchors. One is at the front of the bow and another is on the starboard side. There is none on the port side. Port holes in the bow are for the secondary conning station. At this time the carrier had three catapult bridle catchers, two in the bow and one on the angled portion of the flight deck.

(USS AMERICA)

Volume 29 in the Detail & Scale Series was on the aircraft carrier USS LEXINGTON, and was the first volume in this series to be about a ship rather than an aircraft. With the success of that book, we are now planning to add more volumes on the Navy's supercarriers, and we now turn our attention to the USS AMERICA, CV-66. Work is already underway to do a similar book on the USS FORRESTAL, CV-59, and more carriers will follow.

Having a famous namesake, and being the first nuclear powered aircraft carrier, ENTERPRISE, CVN-65, is perhaps the world's most famous carrier. NIMITZ, CVN-68, was involved with the Iranian rescue mission, the shooting down of two Libyan Su-22s in 1981, and was featured in the movie The Final Countdown. With this much exposure, she is probably second only to ENTERPRISE in name recognition among the American public. FORRESTAL, the first of the supercarriers, also is remembered by many people who have had little more than a passing interest in tailhook aviation. SARATOGA, CV-60, was involved in the raids on Libyan gunboats and Libya itself, and aircraft from the USS JOHN F.

KENNEDY, CV-67, shot down two Libyan MiG-23 Floggers to make the headlines. Except for these brief incidents that appear in the news, the aircraft carriers of the United States Navy perform their important peace-keeping missions all around the globe without much publicity. Whenever there is a need to project power, it is usually one or more of these carriers that is called upon to do the job. Most often it is done with little fanfare, and the majority of Americans could not name more than two or three of these powerful ships. Unlike ENTERPRISE and NIMITZ, AMERICA has not often made the headlines or a movie since the war in Vietnam where she made three combat cruises. Instead, she, and most of her sister carriers, continue the rigorous schedule of training, qualifications, cruises, and yard periods day in and day out. One of the reasons why AMERICA was chosen as the second carrier to be covered in the Detail & Scale Series was that so little has been written publicly about her, and hopefully this book will help tell the public about a very important part of this country's national defense. In addition to her three combat cruises to the Gulf of Tonkin and Vietnam, she has deployed to the Mediterranean, the North



This early view of AMERICA shows the original radar fit and the Terrier missile launcher on the starboard quarter. An SPG-55 fire control radar for the Terrier is located between the launcher and the ship's crane. Two more of these radars are mounted on the superstructure. The radar mast abaft the island mounts the SPS-30 radar which has since been replaced by the SPS-48.

(USS AMERICA)

Atlantic, the South Atlantic, the Western Pacific, and the Indian Ocean. AMERICA took on wounded from the USS LIBERTY after that ship was mistakenly attacked by the Israelis on June 8, 1967. Then, nineteen years later, but again in the Mediterranean, she joined with the USS CORAL SEA, CV-43, and the U.S. Air Force in retaliatory strikes against Libya. After attacking targets in Benghazi, all of her aircraft returned safely.

Preparing a book on a ship is considerably different than doing one on an aircraft. There are many examples of any given type of aircraft, but there is only one USS AMERICA. As will be illustrated on the pages that follow, the AMERICA is quite unique even though she is one of three ships in the KITTY HAWK class of carriers. Since her commissioning, she has been updated with new radars and weapons systems, and many other features have changed over the years. This has not only altered her appearance, but has increased her capabilities as well. All major external changes are illustrated in scores of photographs throughout this book.

After reading the ship's history, the reader is provided a look at Carrier Air Wing One. F-14 Tomcats, F/A-18 Hornets, A-6E TRAM Intruders, S-3A Vikings, E-2C Hawkeyes, and SH-3 Sea King helicopters make up this air wing, and each is illustrated aboard AMERICA in the markings of CVW-1 and eight different squadrons. Then, for forty-nine pages, the reader is taken on a tour of this supercarrier that is an extensive look at one of these huge ships as ever published. It begins up in the superstructure, and goes down to the engine room. It covers everything from the forecastle in the bow to the fantail, propellers, and rudders at the stern. The navigation bridge, flag bridge, pri-fly, catapults, arresting gear, elevators, radars and other antennas, LSO platform, hangar

bays, weapons systems, and many more areas above and below decks are illustrated in page after page of detailed photographs. As is the case with most books in the Detail & Scale Series, the majority of these photos were taken specifically for this publication and have never been published before.

To do a book like this on one of the Navy's aircraft carriers would not be possible without the help and cooperation of many people. The contributors and sources are listed on page 2, but a special acknowledgment and note of thanks is appropriate to some of them here. LCDR Robert Goodman, the A-6 Naval Flight Officer who wrote about his experience of being shot down over Lebanon in The A-6 Intruder in Detail & Scale, is now a member of the ship's company aboard AMERICA, and he initially encouraged the author to do a book on AMERICA. Bob put the author in contact with LT Ken Braithwaite, the Public Affairs Officer aboard AMERICA, who deserves a very special word of thanks. Ken provided all of the support and clearances that enabled the author and Jim Sullivan to take hundreds of photographs of AMERICA. Additionally, he answered many questions or found the specialists who could answer the technical questions he could not. PH1 Joseph Quirk from AMERICA's photographic section provided Detail & Scale with access to the ship's extensive photo files, and generously supplied dozens of photographs. There were many other crew-members who offered various forms of assistance, and everyone aboard was very friendly as well as professional. LCDR Mike John and LT Paul Jenkins at the public affairs office for COMNAVAIRLANT also should be mentioned for their help in coordinating the visits to AMERICA. To all of these people, and to everyone else who worked on the preparation of this book, the author is most grateful.

STATISTICS & FACTS

Horsepower	Over 200,000
Maximum Speed	34 Knots
Overall Length	1,047.5 Feet
Length at Waterline	990 Feet
Extreme Width of Flight Deck (Including Catwalks)	252 Feet
Beam at Waterline	129.33 Feet
Height of Flight Deck Above Water	62 Feet
Draft	35.9 Feet
Area of Flight Deck	4.57 Acres
Flight Deck Maximum Dimensions	1,025 X 238.6 Feet
Hangar Deck Maximum Dimensions	740 X 107 Feet
Hangar Deck Height	25 Feet
Displacement at Load Draft in Long Tons	77,600
Number of Crew Including Air Wing	5,000+
Number of Meals Served Daily	15,000+
Number of Anchors	2
Weight of Anchors	30 Tons Each
Weight of Each Link of Anchor Chain	391 Pounds
Number of Propellers (All Five-Blade)	4
Diameter of Propellers	22 Feet
Weight of Propellers	69,300 Pounds Each
Number of Deck Edge Elevators	4
Maximum Dimensions of Elevators	85 X 52 Feet
Capacity of Elevators	80,000 Pounds
Size of Each Elevator	3,800 Square Feet
Number of Steam Catapults	4 (3 C-13 and 1 C-13-1)
Daily Capacity of Water Distilling Plants	280,000 Gallons
Boilers	8 Foster-Wheeler
Main Engines	4 Geared Turbines
Missiles	3 Launchers for NATO Sea Sparrow with 8 Missiles Each
Anti-Aircraft/Missile Guns	3 Phalanx 20mm Mk-16 CIWS
Saluting Guns	4 40mm
Rockets	Super-RBOC Mk-36 Chaffroc System

At maximum endurance and the most economical speed of sixteen knots, AMERICA can travel for twenty-one days traveling slightly over 8,000 miles.

The momentum achieved by AMERICA fully loaded at full power is equivalent to that achieved by a fully loaded fleet of 1800 tractor trailer trucks traveling at sixty miles per hour.

AMERICA CONTAINS:

Bakery	TV Lounges	TV Studio (WAMR)
Barber Shop	Weather Bureau	Medical Operating Room
Carpenter Shop	Tailor Shop	Paint Shop
Chapel	Electronic Game Room	Pharmacy
Dental Office	Ladies' Powder Rooms (3)	Photographic Laboratory
Dry Cleaning Plant	Laundry	Post Office
Hospital	Library	Printing Plant
TV Repair Shop	Sheet Metal & Pipe Shop	Cobbler Shop
	Ship's Stores (7)	

SHIP'S HISTORY



This overhead view of AMERICA shows the ship generally as she appears today. Only minor detail changes have been made since this photograph was taken. Most notably, the jet blast deflector (JBD) for the number two catapult has been enlarged to the same size as the one for catapult number one. The Van Velm bridle arrestor for catapult two has been removed, and the 66 on the forward end of the flight deck is now only an outline. Newer launchers for the Sea Sparrow missiles have replaced those seen here.

(USS AMERICA)

Immediately after World War II the U.S. Navy recognized that carrier aviation was in for dramatic transformations if it was going to survive at all. The switch from pistons and propellers to jet engines on many aircraft mandated many of these changes. Jets made the use of catapults mandatory, and designing jets so that they could fly slowly enough to land on a carrier caused many problems and compromises in their design. Jet blast deflectors had to be designed to be placed behind the catapults in order to protect crewmen and other aircraft as the pilot went to maximum power for launch. The jets were getting larger and heavier, and carrier designs had to keep up. Stronger catapults, strengthened flight decks, and larger elevators with a greater lifting capacity were all required. Jets required more fuel, so provisions were needed to accommodate it. The dawn of the nuclear age also brought on more new and different requirements in order to deal with these awesome weapons.

The standard carrier in the U.S. Navy at the close of World War II was represented by the ESSEX class. Relatively unmodified, many of these carriers successfully operated the first jets with tail hooks during the Korean War, but it became obvious that the unmodified ESSEX class carriers were already stretched to their limit. Even before the Korean War started, the Navy was working on improvements and modernizations that would allow the ESSEX class carriers to operate the newer, faster, and heavier jets that were entering the inventory. Stronger catapults and arresting gear, strengthened decks and elevators, and new angled landing areas in the flight deck were just a few of the new features added. Similar modernizations were accomplished on the three larger MIDWAY class carriers that were originally completed with axial flight decks just after the end of World War II.

The carrier modernization program was in full swing by the end of the Korean War, and so extensive were the changes to these ships that it was hard to believe that the newly converted ESSEX class carriers were often the same ships that had fought the Pacific battles in World War II. While the appearance of the three MIDWAY class

carriers was not altered as dramatically, their conversions involved considerable alterations to their original axial-deck designs. The modernizations to the ESSEX class carriers allowed many of them to operate through the war in Vietnam and into the 1970s. The LEXINGTON, now classified as AVT-16, still serves as the Navy's only training carrier. (See Detail & Scale Volume 29.) One of the MIDWAY class carriers, the USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, CVA-42, was removed from service in October 1977, but the other two, MIDWAY and CORAL SEA, have remained in service much longer. At this writing, CORAL SEA is scheduled to be removed from service in early 1990, while MIDWAY will remain active for several more years to come.

In spite of the effectiveness of the carrier modernization programs, the Navy recognized the need for a new "supercarrier" that would more effectively take its carrier air wings to sea. One of the first such concepts was the USS UNITED STATES, which was originally designated CVB-58. This flush deck design was never built, but continued design work resulted in FORRESTAL, CVA-59, which became the first supercarrier to be built.

FORRESTAL was a considerable advance over the MIDWAY class, being about 15,000 tons heavier. She was laid down on July 14, 1952, and was commissioned on October 1, 1955. She was followed by three more ships in her class, all of which were near sisters with only detail differences. SARATOGA was commissioned in 1956, RANGER in 1957, and INDEPENDENCE followed in 1959. But by this time, the Navy had already recognized some shortcomings in the design and had ordered changes beginning with KITTY HAWK which became the lead ship of the next class.

The KITTY HAWK class carriers were considered "improved FORRESTALS" and differed in several respects. Perhaps the most important change, and certainly one of the most visible, was the rearrangement of the aircraft elevators. On the FORRESTAL class carriers there were four elevators, three of which were on the starboard side. One of these three was forward, and the



The top photograph is dated January 1969, and the lower one was taken in May 1967. They show starboard and port side views of the AMERICA as she originally appeared. Note the Terrier launchers on the quarters, and the fact that there was no SPG-55 radar located next to the Terrier launcher on the port quarter. There was one on the starboard quarter, and two more on the superstructure. No defensive weapons were located on either side of the bow at this time. The 66 on the starboard side of the island was located forward rather than being on the smokestack, and the lower portion of the superstructure was not painted black as it is now.

(Both U.S. Navy)

other two were aft of the superstructure. The only port side elevator was positioned at the forward end of the landing area, and it was this one that caused the most problems. First, since it was part of the landing area, it could not be used while aircraft were being recovered. Since it was also in front of the two waist catapults, it could not be used when these catapults were launching aircraft. In fact, launching aircraft from the forward catapults was the only flight operation that could take place when this elevator was in use.

If the carrier was recovering several aircraft at any given time, such as after a strike, each aircraft would land and then taxi to starboard where the one elevator forward of the island could take them below. But aircraft land so rapidly that one elevator cannot handle all of them, so another alternative was to have the aircraft taxi aft between the landing area and island to one of the two elevators aft of the island. However, this area is usually used to park aircraft, and if aircraft were spotted there, landing aircraft had to be parked forward, thus preventing the use of at least one of the forward catapults.

It is surprising that the Navy did not foresee these problems during the design stage for the FORRESTAL class, but experience quickly emphasized the need for a

better elevator arrangement. The rather simple solution was incorporated into the KITTY HAWK class, and has remained the standard design for all subsequent U.S. Navy carriers. There are still four deck edge elevators, and three remain on the starboard side. However, two are now forward of the island, with only one aft of it. The port elevator is now located much further aft, out of the landing area and behind the two waist catapults. All four elevators can be used during flight operations. When aircraft are being launched, the two aft elevators, numbers three (starboard) and four (port) can serve the two waist catapults. The two elevators forward of the superstructure on the starboard side (numbers one and two) can serve the forward catapults. During recovery operations aircraft can land, then taxi to one of the two elevators forward of the island. They can be taken down to the hangar deck, or simply park on one of the elevators while waiting to launch again as in the case with carrier qualifications.

The second major change made to the KITTY HAWK class involved the carrier's defense armament. As built, the four FORRESTAL class carriers were armed with eight five-inch guns. These were positioned on large sponsons that were located two forward and two aft on

the sides of the ships. The forward sponsons slowed the ships in heavy seas, and were subsequently removed on all except RANGER where only the four forward guns, but not the sponsons, were removed. Over the years, the aft guns were removed, and have now been replaced with missiles.

By the time the KITTY HAWK class was begun, the very limited value of barrelled weapons against fast aircraft was recognized, and these ships were built with twin Terrier launchers on each of the quarters. No defensive weapons were located forward on these ships as built. Magazines stored up to forty missiles per launcher, giving these ships a rather large capacity of the long-range fleet air defense missile.

The superstructure was also a little smaller on the KITTY HAWK class carriers, and a separate radar mast was located aft of it. Otherwise, these carriers were in most respects similar to the FORRESTAL class ships.

The first two carriers of this new class, KITTY HAWK, CVA-63, and CONSTELLATION, CVA-64, were near sisters with relatively minor detail differences. Both were commissioned in 1961. But the Navy was now considering nuclear power on all future carriers, and the next carrier to be built was the nuclear powered ENTERPRISE, CVAN-65. Except for her unique boxy superstructure that was topped with a futuristic phased array radar, ENTERPRISE was very much the same design as the KITTY HAWK class. Being the first nuclear powered carrier, and the only one in the world at that time, her building costs were alarmingly high, although her advantages would have seemingly justified these costs.

ENTERPRISE was launched in September 1960, and commissioned in November 1961. In the interim, the Kennedy administration came into office with its Secretary of Defense Robert Strange McNamara. The debate as to whether future carriers should be nuclear or fossil-fueled delayed the next two carriers considerably. McNamara shortsightedly reasoned that it would be cheaper for them to be conventionally powered because the initial building costs were much lower. But considering the ever-increasing cost of fuel oil and the length of time these ships remain in service, it should have been evident that in the long run the nuclear powered carriers would have been much cheaper. Further, the advantages of the nuclear carrier should have also been evident in regards to its ability to steam for years without refueling, and its capability to carry more jet fuel and other supplies and equipment in place of the usual boiler fuel.

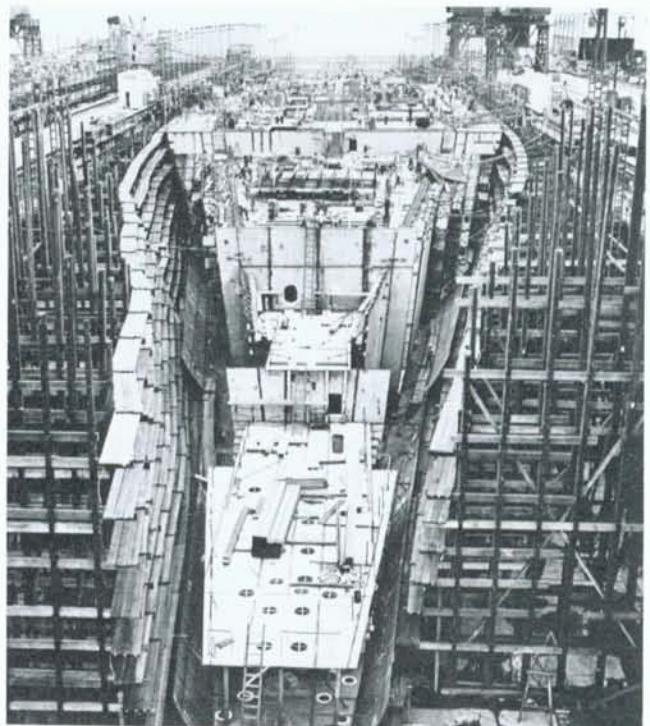
As a result, AMERICA, CVA-66, the next carrier to be built, was conventionally powered, and basically a repeat KITTY HAWK. However, there were enough differences in the design of this ship that the official name of the class was changed to the KITTY HAWK/AMERICA class. The next ship, the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY, CVA-67, had even more differences, and is officially classified as a one-ship class. However, it is often listed as a member of the KITTY HAWK class. She was commissioned in 1968, seven years after KITTY HAWK, CONSTELLATION, and



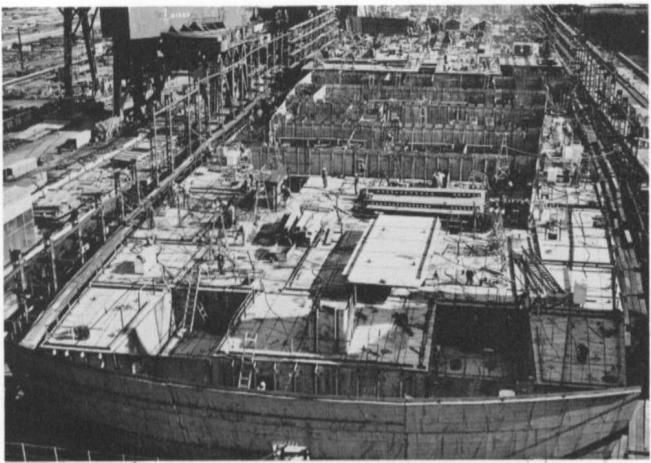
The keel of the USS AMERICA was laid on January 9, 1961, at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company.
(U.S. Navy)

ENTERPRISE, and three and one-half years after AMERICA. Much of the delay was caused by the argument over nuclear power. Fortunately, after KENNEDY, all carriers have been the nuclear powered ships of the NIMITZ class.

With this background on the development of aircraft carriers in the U.S. Navy since World War II, it is now appropriate to turn our attention specifically to AMERICA. Originally classified CVA-66, her keel was laid at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company on January 9, 1961. She was christened by Mrs. David L. McDonald, wife of the then Chief of Naval Operations,



Dated May 28, 1962, this photograph was taken from the bow and looks aft. It reveals how much work had been completed on the carrier some sixteen months after the keel was laid.
(USS AMERICA)



On January 29, 1963, just over two years after the laying of the keel, work on AMERICA had progressed to this point. This view was taken from the aft end of the ship and looks forward.

(USS AMERICA)

and launched on February 1, 1964. After successfully completing builder's trials on November 20, 1964, she began her preliminary acceptance tests. Following her successful completion of these evaluations, she was commissioned on January 23, 1965. She was the fifth ship to be named AMERICA, but is the first warship under that name ever commissioned into the United States Navy. The first AMERICA had been designed as a warship, and her keel was laid in 1777. But a lack of funds and subsequent delays in production (some things never change) postponed the ship's completion until 1782. Prior to being commissioned, she was transferred to France as a token of good will.

Captain Lawrence Heyworth, Jr., USN, was the first commanding officer, and he took the present AMERICA to sea for the first time on March 16, 1965. While at sea, Commander Kenneth B. Austin made AMERICA's first arrested landing in an A-4 Skyhawk. Carrier Air Wing Six was the first to embark aboard AMERICA, and it made a two-month shakedown cruise in the Caribbean from May 1 until July 1 when the ship returned to her home port of

Norfolk, Virginia. After participating in naval exercises and training cruises, AMERICA left for her first major deployment to the Mediterranean Sea on November 30. There she joined the Sixth Fleet for a deployment that lasted seven months. Her first cruise was uneventful, consisting of training exercises and port calls. In July 1966, AMERICA returned home to Norfolk and entered the yards for an overhaul. This yard period was followed by operations off Cuba, then after participating in the Second Fleet exercise "OPERATION LANTIFLEX 66," AMERICA returned to Norfolk to prepare for her second extended deployment.

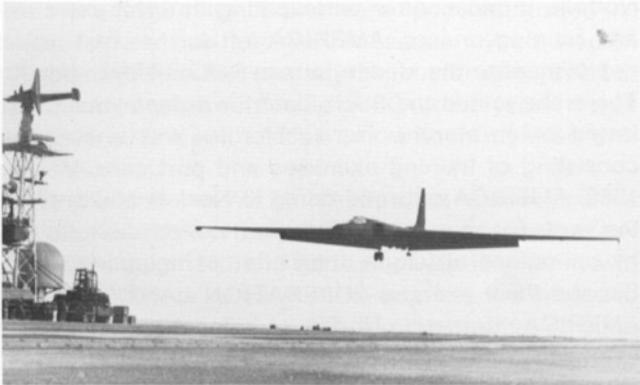
On January 10, 1967, AMERICA departed for the Mediterranean to relieve the USS INDEPENDENCE on January 22. As she neared Gibraltar, Soviet Bear long-range reconnaissance aircraft were intercepted by F-4B Phantoms as they approached AMERICA, and the Phantoms escorted the Bears as they flew past the ship.

In April a threatening crisis in Greece cancelled a port call to Toulon, France, and AMERICA moved eastward as the flagship of Task Force 65 to be available to protect American citizens in that troubled nation. Fortunately, no violence ever materialized in Greece, and the task force was not called upon to act. Unfortunately, the situation in the Middle East was to cause a crisis and a tragedy later in AMERICA's deployment. As things got worse in the area, the first event that directly involved AMERICA occurred on June 2, when the Soviet destroyer DDG-381 constantly cut through the carrier's formation. This continued for several days, then on June 7, Vice Admiral William I. Martin, Commander Sixth Fleet, sent a message to the destroyer warning of her unsafe actions that were restricting the Sixth Fleet's freedom of movement on the high seas. Although DDG-381 soon left, other Soviet



On February 1, 1964, AMERICA was launched as seen in these two photographs. A huge map of the United States was attached to her bow for the occasion. It would be almost another year before she was ready for commissioning on January 23, 1965.

(Both U.S. Navy)



Although it was certainly not designed for carrier operations, a U-2 made a landing aboard AMERICA as shown here. The photograph at right is included not so much as to prove that the U-2 actually landed, but to reveal details of the superstructure as built with the early radar fit. Two of the SPG-55 fire control radars for the Terrier system are visible just forward of the smokestack. Although they appear to be stepped, the lower radar is on the port side of the island, while the higher one is on the starboard side.

(Both U.S. Air Force)

ships stayed in the area harassing AMERICA and her escorts for several more days.

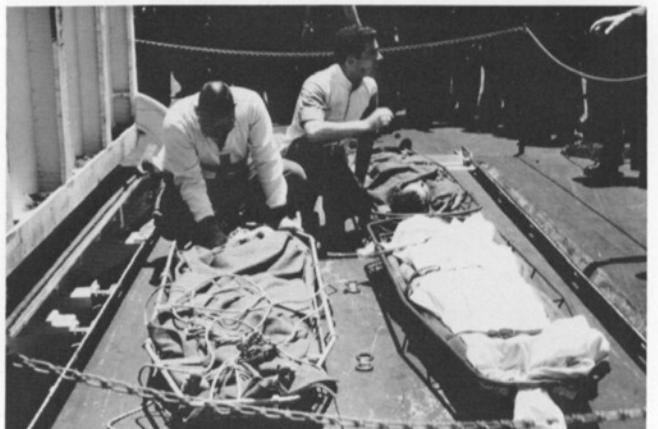
On June 5, while AMERICA was refueling from the oiler USS TRUCKEE, AO-147, word was received that the Israelis and the Arabs were at war. Then, at 2:00 p.m. local time, the technical research ship USS LIBERTY, AGTR-5, was attacked in international waters by Israeli torpedo boats and jet aircraft. When first word of the attack reached AMERICA, there was no indication as to who the attackers were. In a matter of minutes, F-4B Phantoms were in the air to ward off any possible attack against the task force. Four A-4 Skyhawks were loaded with bombs and launched. As these aircraft with their fighter cover flew toward the LIBERTY, word was received that it had been the Israelis that had attacked the LIBERTY by mistake. As a result, the aircraft were recalled, but the Israeli attack had killed thirty-four Americans and injured seventy-five more. Fifteen were seriously wounded.

At 10:30 a.m. local time on June 9, two helicopters from AMERICA rendezvoused with LIBERTY and began transferring the more seriously wounded to the carrier

where more extensive medical facilities were available. An hour later AMERICA reached LIBERTY and more of the wounded and dead were transferred to the carrier.

The rest of AMERICA's second deployment was relatively quiet, and on September 20, after eight and one-half months away from home, the carrier tied up at Pier 12 in the Norfolk Navy Yard. On October 6, she entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for her second overhaul. While there, Debra Barnes, Miss America, 1968, came aboard to dedicate the carrier's C-1A Carrier Onboard Delivery (COD) aircraft which was named "Miss America."

Shortly after the New Year's celebrating was over, AMERICA spent three days conducting sea trial in the Virginia Capes Operating Area. She then departed for a month-long cruise in the Caribbean for refresher training and inspections. Other training exercises filled the first three months of 1968. Then, on April 10, AMERICA left her pier and headed for Yankee Station off the coast of Vietnam. She was leaving for her first combat tour in Southeast Asia. It was May 30 when she reached the waters off Vietnam, and at 0630H the next morning, she launched



When the technical research ship USS LIBERTY, AGTR-5, was attacked by Israel in June 1967, AMERICA steamed to her assistance to provide medical care for the wounded. In the photograph at left, an injured crewman is being hurried from a helicopter to sick bay. At right, other injured crewmen from LIBERTY are about to be lowered on an armament elevator down to sick bay.

(Both U.S. Navy)



Taken enroute to one of her combat cruises, AMERICA prepares to refuel while underway. On her deck are F-4 Phantoms, KA-3 and EA-3 Skywarriors, RA-5 Vigilantes, A-7 Corsairs, and A-6 Intruders. (USS AMERICA)

her first combat strikes against the enemy.

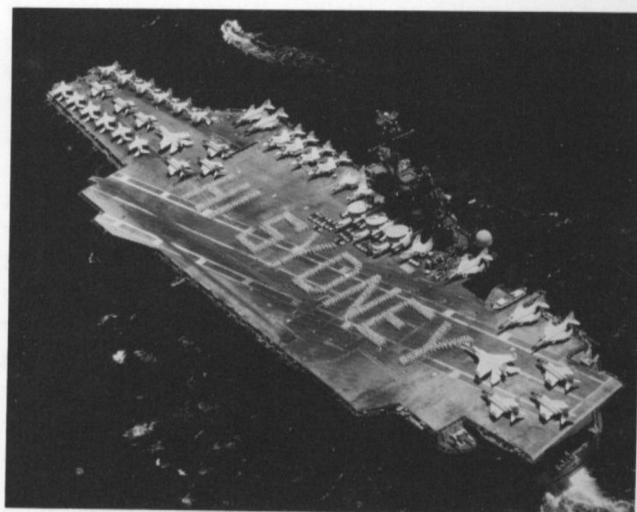
During four line periods, consisting of 112 days on Yankee Station, aircraft from Carrier Air Wing Six pounded the roads and waterways, destroyed trucks and waterborne logistics craft, hammered at petroleum storage areas and truck parks, and destroyed bridges and cave storage areas in an attempt to impede the flow of men and war materials to the south. Between line periods, AMERICA visited Hong Kong, Yokosuka, and Subic Bay. On October 29, AMERICA launched her last strikes, and once the aircraft had returned, she began the long trip home. After a stop at Subic Bay, she headed for Norfolk via Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil. Prior to entering the harbor at Sydney, Australia, the crew spelled out the greeting "HI SYDNEY" to that city. Three days were spent in Sydney, then the next port of call was Wellington, New Zealand. After a stop at Rio de Janeiro, she headed for Norfolk to complete her "round-the-world" cruise.

After leaves for the crew and celebrations throughout the holidays, AMERICA again left Pier 12 at Norfolk on January 8, 1969. She headed for the Jacksonville, Florida, Operating Area where she conducted carrier qualifications for VA-174 (A-7 Corsair), VA-72 (A-6 Intruder), RVAH-3 (RA-5C Vigilante), and VAW-122 (E-2 Hawkeye). Once this was complete, she sailed for Norfolk to enter the Navy Yard for a nine-month major overhaul.

After finishing her yard period, another Christmas and New Year's Day had come and gone, and it was January 5, 1970, when AMERICA departed Norfolk to begin a nine-week training cruise in the Guantanamo, Cuba, Operating Area. Long hours were spent training and in preparation for an Operational Readiness Inspection, the Naval Technical Proficiency Inspection, and weapons firing at the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range. At the com-

pletion of this testing and training, AMERICA headed for the Jacksonville area to conduct carrier qualifications with various squadrons stationed in the Jacksonville/Cecil Field area. She then returned to Norfolk, arriving on March 8.

On April 10, with CVW-9 aboard, AMERICA left Norfolk to begin her second combat deployment in the Gulf of Tonkin. Operations against the enemy began on May 26, when CDR Fred M. Backman, Commanding Officer of VA-165, and his bombardier-navigator, LCDR Jack Haw-



In November 1968, while returning from her first deployment to Vietnam, AMERICA stopped over in Sydney, Australia, for a four-day goodwill visit. Her crew spelled out HI SYDNEY on the flight deck as a greeting to the people of that city. The original shorter JBDs are visible on the flight deck. Also note that the 66 on the flight deck is an outline as it is today. (U.S. Navy)



As CVA-66, AMERICA celebrated her 66,000th arrested landing which was made by Captain Thomas B. Hayward, AMERICA's commanding officer at that time. The landing was made by the ship's own C-1A Trader COD aircraft, and took place on July 25, 1970, in the Gulf of Tonkin. Unfortunately, now that the C-1s have been retired, the C-2 aircraft no longer are assigned to individual carriers.

(U.S. Navy)

ley, flew the first combat sortie of the 1970 WESTPAC cruise in an A-6 Intruder. On the same day, the new A-7E Corsair was given its first taste of combat. At 1201, LTJG Dave Licherman, of VA-146, was catapulted from AMERICA in the first A-7E ever to be launched in combat.

Five line periods comprised 100 days on Yankee Station as AMERICA's aircraft continued to attack enemy installations. She also left the combat zone for periods of training near Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. The fifth and final line period in the Gulf of Tonkin was completed on November 7, and she departed Yankee Station for Subic Bay. In 100 days, her aircraft had flown 10,600 sorties, completed 10,804 carrier landings, and expended 11,190 tons of ordnance. All of this was accomplished without a single combat loss and only one major landing accident that did not result in any fatalities. It was a record of which AMERICA was justifiably proud. After a stop in Sydney, Australia, she rounded Cape Horn on December 5, and headed north. AMERICA arrived at her home port of Norfolk, Virginia, on December 21 in time for a joyous holiday reunion with the families of the ship's crew.

After a standdown following her extended combat cruise to the Gulf of Tonkin, AMERICA entered the Norfolk Navy Yard for a minor overhaul. This was completed on March 22, 1971, in time for AMERICA to successfully complete her Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection. April, May, and June were spent conducting training exercises, inspections, and evaluations. Then, on July 6, AMERICA departed Norfolk for a Mediterranean deployment, conducting training on the way. On July 16, she relieved the USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, CVA-42, at Rota, Spain, then entered the Mediterranean for the third time since her commissioning. Unlike her last cruise in the Mediterranean and her two subsequent combat deployments, this cruise to the Mediterranean was routine, consisting of training exercises, standard operations, and various port calls. AMERICA was relieved by KENNEDY on December 9, and she headed back to Norfolk, arriving there on December 16th. It seemed that the

AMERICA had a way of making it home for Christmas.

Shortly after New Year's Day, AMERICA entered the Norfolk Navy Yard for a minor overhaul which lasted only two months. She then returned to sea for five days of sea trials. After the usual training exercises, inspections, and evaluations, AMERICA was again ready for her next extended deployment. Sailing orders had been changed from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Tonkin, and AMERICA was on her way to a third combat deployment. By July 12, she was launching strikes against the enemy in Vietnam, but a ruptured main feed pump forced an early return to Subic Bay on July 25. It was August 9 before AMERICA was at sea again.

On October 6, aircraft from AMERICA dropped the infamous Thanh Hoa Bridge. The destruction of this bridge had been a major objective since the bombing had started in 1964. After a visit to Singapore, AMERICA returned to Yankee Station where a fire broke out on November 19. The fire was in the number two catapult spaces. Although she was not able to regain full use of the number two catapult until after a visit to Subic Bay in early December, AMERICA remained on station and met her commitments. After the December port call to Subic Bay, AMERICA again left for Yankee Station on December 8, and remained there until the Christmas Cease-Fire. She anchored in Hong Kong Harbor on December 28, and remained there until after the start of the New Year. This time, AMERICA had not made it home for Christmas.

On January 4, 1973, AMERICA left Hong Kong for a short stop at Subic Bay, then she returned to the line in the Gulf of Tonkin. She was operating off Vietnam when the peace settlement was signed in Paris ending the American involvement in the war. Of course, the North Vietnamese had no intention of honoring the agreement, and stepped up their end of the war once the United States had left. But it was over for U.S. forces, and AMERICA returned to Subic Bay on February 3, where she remained until February 20. After a stop at Mayport, Florida, on March 22 to pick up teenaged sons of crew-members, AMERICA headed for Norfolk. It had been arranged for the sons to come aboard at Mayport so they could ride the carrier back to Norfolk with their dads, and the experience was thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part. On March 24, AMERICA tied up at Pier 12 at Norfolk, thus ending her sixth major deployment. To this point, three of her six major deployments had been combat cruises off Vietnam.

On May 11, AMERICA moved to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for a three-month minor overhaul. She departed the shipyard on August 10, and returned to Pier 12 where she prepared for sea trials. On August 21, she was at sea again for the first of several short at-sea periods. On August 29, the carrier's COD aircraft, C-1A "Miss America," made the 100,000th arrested landing aboard the ship. The rest of the year was spent undergoing the usual inspections and evaluations. Refresher training and carrier qualifications were conducted until the ship returned

to Norfolk on December 13. She remained there until after New Years Day, 1974.

It was January 3, 1974, when AMERICA departed for her fourth Mediterranean cruise and her seventh major deployment. She relieved the USS INDEPENDENCE on January 11, at Rota, Spain, and came under the control of the Sixth Fleet. The deployment was routine and uneventful, and lasted until AMERICA returned to Norfolk on August 3.

She was not home very long before she was at sea again on September 6 to participate in the NATO exercise NORTHERN MERGER that was being conducted in the North Sea. During the exercise, AMERICA was closely watched by Soviet surface units and Bear and Badger aircraft. In spite of poor weather conditions, CVW-8 conducted a rigorous schedule of air operations without accident. AMERICA then steamed for Portsmouth, England, where she anchored on September 29 for a change of command ceremony. After five days in England, AMERICA set sail for Norfolk, and arrived there on October 12. She then entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard on November 27 for a major overhaul.

It was September 25 when AMERICA got underway again as she left the shipyard. After three days of sea trials she returned to Pier 12. Then, on November 17, she departed for the Guantanamo Operating Area to conduct refresher training. Next was a visit to the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range to fire Phoenix, Sparrow, Sidewinder, and Terrier missiles. With this completed, she returned to Norfolk on December 16 to spend Christmas at home with family and friends. By the end of 1975, AMERICA had been redesignated CV from the previous CVA as the Navy changed to the "CV concept." Under this concept, carriers were no longer designated as attack carriers (CVA) or anti-submarine support carriers (CVS). Instead, the large-deck supercarriers would perform both attack and anti-submarine duties, since the ASW carriers of the ESSEX class had been decommissioned and taken out of service.

After some refresher training and an Operational Readiness Evaluation, AMERICA participated in the NATO Exercise, SAFE PASS '76, with naval forces from Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands. Then, with CVW-6 embarked, AMERICA departed Norfolk on April 15 for her next major deployment to the Mediterranean. Except for some tense moments during the evacuation of Americans from war-torn Lebanon, the cruise was relatively uneventful. AMERICA participated in the usual operations and exercises while operating with the Sixth Fleet. She operated the S-3A Viking anti-submarine aircraft and the SH-3H Sea King helicopter in a number of successful ASW operations, thus confirming the CV concept. After being relieved by the USS FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, AMERICA headed for Norfolk where she arrived on October 25. On November 5, she steamed slowly up the Elizabeth River and moored at Pier 3 at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard where she remained for the rest of the year.

On February 10, 1977, AMERICA again left Norfolk to begin sea trials off of the Virginia Capes. She was rejoined by CVW-6 by the end of the month. Training and evaluations continued until June 10, when she departed on a five-week deployment to the South Atlantic. On September 29, she began her next major deployment to the Mediterranean Sea with the Sixth Fleet. One of the highlights of this cruise was a visit to Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, from November 22nd until the 26th. The crew celebrated Thanksgiving while AMERICA was anchored in the port of this communist country.

New Year's Day, 1978, found AMERICA anchored at Genoa, Italy, with her crew deserving a well deserved liberty. She departed on January 8, and headed for operations in the Tyrrhenian Sea. This deployment lasted until April 25 when AMERICA finally returned home. Out of the previous 440 days, she had been away from home for 330. After a month-long standdown, she returned to sea on May 30 with CVW-3 to conduct carrier qualifications. Once this was completed, she entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for an overhaul. It was during this yard period that the barrel-shaped capsule life rafts were added to the sides of the catwalks around the flight deck. Once the overhaul was completed, AMERICA conducted successful sea trials on September 19 and 20. The remainder of the year was spent conducting refresher training and carrier qualifications with CVW-6 and CVW-8. She tied up at Pier 12 at Norfolk on December 9 to spend the holidays in port.

On January 3, 1979, CVW-11 flew from the west coast and went aboard AMERICA for the first time. Two days later the ship departed for a six week training period in the Caribbean Sea. While anchored off St. Thomas, AMERICA celebrated her fourteenth birthday in the warm Caribbean sun. Her major deployment to the Mediterranean, which began in March, was filled with a number of highlights that included the first live Harpoon missile exercise in the Mediterranean on July 28, and the last live firing of a Terrier missile from any carrier in the U.S. Navy on July 29. During her cruise to the Mediterranean Sea, AMERICA made twelve port calls in five different countries. After returning home on September 22, she conducted carrier qualifications for the new F/A-18 Hornet beginning on October 30. On November 6, she entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for the most extensive overhaul she had undergone since her commissioning. It would be almost a year before AMERICA put to sea again.

Almost all of 1980 was spent in the shipyard as extensive work was done on the carrier. The Terrier missile system was removed and replaced with the NATO Sea Sparrow system. The Phalanx CIWS gun system was also installed at this time, as was the Tactical Flag Command Center. All major engineering plant components were overhauled. The SPS-43 radar was replaced by the SPS-49. A meteorological satellite system to receive all geostationary and geosynchronous satellite information was installed as was a new air traffic control display system. Four double probe receiver stations for underway refuel-

ing were added to allow the ship to receive DFM and JP-5 simultaneously. Other important improvements and upgrades were also made, and when AMERICA conducted her post-repair trials in late September, her capabilities had been substantially increased. The remainder of the year was spent conducting sea trials, refresher training, and carrier qualifications. On December 15, she concluded carrier qualifications and headed home for the holidays.

On January 13, 1981, AMERICA left Norfolk to conduct an Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE). The following day, Naval Aviation history was made aboard AMERICA when Ensign Brenda Robinson, USNR, piloting a C-1A Trader, became the first black female aviator to become carrier qualified.

On March 8, AMERICA became the first aircraft carrier to prove the effectiveness of the Phalanx Close-In Weapon System when a target drone was completely destroyed by one of the mounts.

AMERICA began her eleventh major deployment on April 14 as she again headed toward the Mediterranean Sea. The highlight of this cruise was when AMERICA began her transit of the Suez Canal on May 6 and headed for the Indian Ocean. She was the first U.S. aircraft carrier to pass through the canal since INTREPID, CVS-11, did so in 1967 just prior to the Arab-Israeli war in that year. AMERICA was also the first supercarrier to make the transit since the canal was modified to handle supertankers. It took ten hours and ten minutes to make the 104.5 mile transit. Most of the remainder of her deployment was spent in the Indian Ocean. On October 21, AMERICA again passed through the Suez Canal, this time heading in a northerly direction. Because of the unsettled security situation that followed the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, AMERICA's transit was given the utmost security consideration by the Egyptian Government. This included a patrol vessel as an escort, a helicopter for reconnaissance purposes on both banks of the canal, and patrols by the Egyptian Army along the adjacent canal roads. AMERICA made her

transit without incident and re-entered the Mediterranean Sea. After brief operations, she finally headed home on November 1, arriving in Norfolk on November 12.

By January 1, 1982, AMERICA had entered the Norfolk Navy Shipyard for a minor overhaul that lasted until April 20. Until August she conducted a heavy schedule of training, evaluations, and qualifications. Then, on August 23, she headed for the North Atlantic with CVW-1 to participate in UNITED EFFORT '82 which was followed by the NATO exercise NORTHERN WEDDING '82. After port calls in Scotland and England, AMERICA headed for the Mediterranean Sea to participate in another NATO exercise called DISPLAY DETERMINATION. On October 8, she left the Mediterranean and sailed for the Caribbean Operating Area for carrier workups and an Operational Readiness Evaluation. She returned to Norfolk on November 4 to begin preparing for her upcoming Mediterranean/Indian Ocean deployment, departing Norfolk on December 10 to begin this cruise.

By January 1, 1983, AMERICA was steaming toward the Lebanese coast to relieve the USS NIMITZ, CVN-68. Her mission was to support the Multi-National Peacekeeping Forces in Lebanon. The following day she held a turnover with NIMITZ, then took up station off the coast of Lebanon. After being relieved by NIMITZ on January 22, AMERICA made a port call to Athens, Greece. Five days later she headed for anchorage at Port Said, Egypt, prior to her transit of the Suez Canal on January 31. During February, March, and April she conducted operations in the Indian Ocean. On May 4, she transited northbound through the Suez Canal and reentered the Mediterranean. By May 23, she was headed home and arrived in Norfolk on June 2. After a standdown period, she entered Norfolk Navy Yard for an overhaul on July 8. AMERICA remained in the yards until October 28, when she was tasked with a "No Notice Readiness" exercise. Once this was completed, she conducted carrier qualifications and refresher training. Finally, on December 14, she arrived at Norfolk to spend the holidays.

During the first three months of 1984, AMERICA con-



In 1981, after AMERICA made her first deployment to the Indian Ocean, she became the first aircraft carrier of the U.S. Navy to transit the Suez Canal since 1967. Both of these photographs were taken as she passed through the canal.

(Both USS AMERICA)



During the NATO exercise "Ocean Safari '85", AMERICA visited Vestfjord, Norway, and in the process became the first U.S. aircraft carrier to operate inside a Norwegian fjord. This photo shows AMERICA at Vestfjord, with the Norwegian mountains in the background.

(USS AMERICA)

ducted the usual rigorous schedules of inspections and evaluations while continuing her refresher training. Then, on April 24, she departed for her major deployment that began in the Caribbean Sea where she participated in Exercise OCEAN VENTURE '84. She then steamed for Caracas, Venezuela, and arrived there on May 5. After a brief port call, AMERICA began her transit of the Atlantic Ocean on May 9, and arrived in Malaga, Spain, on May 21. Departing Malaga on May 29, she headed for Port Said, then transited the Suez Canal on June 4. From then until the end of August, she conducted operations in the Indian Ocean while receiving several "visits" from Soviet long-range reconnaissance aircraft.

After being relieved by ENTERPRISE, AMERICA transited the Red Sea, Suez Canal, and the Mediterranean beginning on August 30. Throughout September and October she continued a normal routine of operations and port calls in the Mediterranean Sea until being relieved by EISENHOWER, CVN-69, on October 27. AMERICA then headed for home, and arrived in Norfolk on November 14. After conducting carrier qualifications for T-2 and TA-4 aircraft from various training units in the Key West area between November 29 and December 18, AMERICA returned home for the holidays.

The first four months of 1985 were spent in the Norfolk Navy Yard for refitting and repairs in preparation for the

next sea period. On May 17, AMERICA left the yards to return to Pier 12. Beginning on May 27, she again began a busy schedule of training, qualifications, evaluations, and inspections.

AMERICA departed Norfolk on August 24 on the first leg of a major NATO exercise, OCEAN SAFARI '85. The carrier's movements were tracked by Soviet ships and aircraft. On September 4, AMERICA began a transit of the North Atlantic toward Vestfjord, Norway, where she became the first U.S. aircraft carrier to conduct flight operations inside a Norwegian fjord. When OCEAN SAFARI '85 ended on September 20, AMERICA steamed to Portsmouth, England, for a visit. On September 30, she headed for Norfolk, and, after participating in exercises with the USS CORAL SEA, she arrived at Pier 12 on October 9. Fleet carrier qualifications were conducted throughout the rest of the year during two short at-sea periods.

AMERICA's fifteenth major deployment began on March 10, 1986. After her arrival in the Mediterranean, AMERICA participated in tri-carrier operations with CORAL SEA and SARATOGA near the so-called "Line of Death" in the Gulf of Sidra. On March 24, Libyan missile batteries fired on aircraft from VF-102, one of AMERICA's embarked F-14 fighter squadrons. In defense, AMERICA's A-6 squadron attacked and sank a Libyan "Ia Com-



After major deployments, ships undergo yard periods for maintenance and upgrading. These two photographs show AMERICA in the Norfolk Navy Yard during one of her yard periods. Note the smaller JBD behind cat two, which has since been enlarged to the same size as the one behind cat one. Originally, both were the smaller size. Also note in the lower photo that the first location for the aft Phalanx mount was on the port quarter. It has since been moved to the fantail.

(Both USS AMERICA)



A washdown system allows AMERICA to wash off radioactive contamination in the event of nuclear attack. One might expect that the system would also be quite effective in fighting fires!

(USS AMERICA)

battante" class patrol boat. After several other minor clashes, Libyan offensives declined, and AMERICA departed what has become known as "Mad Dog Station."

On April 15, after Libyan-sponsored terrorism claimed the lives of several Americans overseas, AMERICA joined with CORAL SEA and the U.S. Air Force for a retaliatory strike against Libya. After successful attacks against targets in Benghazi and Tripoli, all of AMERICA's aircraft returned safely. It was the first time since Vietnam that AMERICA's air wing had engaged in actual combat. The remainder of the deployment was more routine, and AMERICA returned to Norfolk on September 10.

After conducting carrier qualifications during October, AMERICA entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for what would become her longest yard period ever. All of 1987 was spent in the yard, and it was February 15, 1988, before AMERICA again was ready for sea. After sea trials, AMERICA participated in FLEET WEEK '88, then began preparations for her next North Atlantic and Mediterranean deployment. She participated in various NATO and other naval exercises throughout the rest of 1988 and into 1989. Then, in early May 1989, she departed for a deployment to the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. As she left, she made the headlines when a tragic fire killed two of her crewmen in a fuel pumping station.

As this is written, she is still on this deployment, and is expected home in early November.

A complete history of AMERICA would fill many volumes. There are incidents that are sometimes humorous, sometimes tragic, and sometimes heroic that fill the day-to-day routine of aircraft carrier operations. Covering all of these would take hundreds of pages. Along the way, AMERICA, her departments, her air wings and squadrons, and her crew have earned countless awards. These include Battle Efficiency Awards, the ADMIRAL FLATLEY SAFETY AWARD, THE COMMANDER NAVAL AIR FORCES ATLANTIC FLEET SAFETY AWARD, the MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION, and many, many more. Most of these awards have been won or earned more than once. This history is but a brief summary of her operations, but it is hoped that it will demonstrate to the reader the rigorous schedule that carriers of the United States Navy maintain. Their crews are away from loved ones more than they are at home. Their pay does not make them rich, but they perform duties that are all critical in keeping their ships ready to defend their country and its freedoms. They are not the heralded heroes that athletes are, but in a much more significant way, they are the heroes of America and of the USS AMERICA.

CARRIER AIR WING ONE



Carrier Air Wing One (CVW-1) is the air wing assigned to AMERICA at the press time for this book. The wing is comprised of nine squadrons which are covered on this and the next five pages. The tail code for the air wing operating aboard AMERICA is AB, and all aircraft assigned to the wing carry this code. Except for the helicopter squadron, each of these squadrons designates one of its aircraft as its CAG aircraft. CAG stands for Commander of the Air Group, and each of these aircraft usually has the commander's name stenciled on it. The nose number, called a modex, on each of these aircraft ends in 00. Sometimes, the CAG aircraft is more colorful, or has other special markings on it that are not present on other aircraft in the same squadron, but this practice is far less prevalent on the tactical paint schemes now in use. Although these CAG aircraft are "designated" for the CAG to fly, in reality they are flown by any pilot in the squadron. On this page is a look at six of the CAG aircraft in Carrier Air Wing One. At left is the CAG F-14 Tomcat from VF-102. Note the large colorful national insignia that is also used on the squadron commander's aircraft, but on no other aircraft within the squadron. At right is the CAG E-2C from VAW-123.

(Left Sullivan, right author)



The two CAG F/A-18 Hornets are pictured here. At left is the CAG aircraft from VFA-82, and at right is the one from VFA-86.

(Both Sullivan)



VS-32's CAG S-3A is shown here taxiing out of the landing area after landing aboard AMERICA. The 700 modex is located just behind the cockpit.

With its tail hook already down, the CAG A-6E TRAM from VA-85 prepares to make its landing. There are no colorful markings on this tactical paint scheme. The 500 modex and 00 on the tail are black, as is the rectangle around the CAG's name under the canopy. All other markings are in a light gray.

(USS AMERICA)

VF-102 & VF-33

88-APV-VF-33A



The two fighter squadrons, each equipped with F-14 Tomcats and shore based at NAS Oceana, Virginia, are VF-102 and VF-33. VF-102 is mentioned first since aircraft assigned to this squadron have nose numbers that begin with a 1. Here, the CAG aircraft from VF-102 waits to position on the catapult while the squadron commander's aircraft is launched.

(Sullivan)



Number 110 is shown as it maneuvers to a parking spot on the flight deck so it can be refueled. Spot painting the tactical schemes often leaves splotches of paint on the surface of the aircraft.

(Sullivan)



With its gear down, but its tail hook up, number 112 is making a touch and go landing. All markings are the subdued low visibility type.

(Sullivan)



VF-33's squadron commander's aircraft, designated by the modex ending in 01, is shown here as it is about to touch down. VF-33's aircraft have nose numbers beginning with a 2. Note that the aircraft has its AB tail code on the inside of the rudders. The star on the tail is black, and the lightning bolt is yellow with a black outline. Colorful national insignias are used on the squadron commander's aircraft and the CAG aircraft from this squadron.

(Sullivan)



Most of the other Tomcats belonging to VF-33 have the low visibility markings seen here on 204. The national insignia is almost invisible, and there is no color in the star or lightning bolt.

(Sullivan)

VFA-82 & VFA-86



Nose numbers beginning with a 3 are assigned to VFA-82's F/A-18 Hornets. Here, 311 aims for the number three wire for recovery.
(Sullivan)



Number 311 is shown again as it is positioned on the catapult for launch.



In tension on cat two, number 303 is only seconds away from launch.



The other Hornet squadron is VFA-86, and its aircraft have nose numbers that start with a 4. This excellent photograph shows 412 as it makes a touch and go landing. Both VFA-82 and VFA-86 are shore based at NAS Cecil Field, Florida.
(Sullivan)

VA-85 & VAQ-137



VA-85 is the all-weather attack squadron in Carrier Air Wing One, and nose numbers begin with a 5 on its A-6E TRAM Intruders. Like the F-14 squadrons, it is shore based at NAS Oceana, Virginia. This is 503 a split second before it touched down and caught the number three wire. Note the opened wing tip speed brakes. (Sullivan)



VA-85 also flies KA-6D tankers to provide in-flight refueling for CVW-1. These aircraft also have nose numbers starting with a 5, but retain the older and more colorful light gull gray over white paint scheme. Here a KA-6D is shown after coming to a full stop. The arresting cable is still attached to its tail hook.



Two more of VA-85's Intruders are shown here during night operations. Number 510 is heavily spot painted, while 514 appears to be in a freshly painted condition. The small dots of light in the background are flight deck personnel with lights and reflective strips on their clothing. (Sullivan)



EA-6B Prowler squadrons based at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, rotate assignments to the various air wings aboard the Navy's carriers. At the time this book was written, VAQ-137 was assigned to CVW-1 aboard AMERICA. The Prowler is a four-seat version of the A-6 design and is a sophisticated electronic warfare aircraft that jams enemy radar installations in order to protect other aircraft. Aboard AMERICA, these Prowlers presently have nose numbers beginning with a 6, as shown in this photograph. Other EA-6B units, to include Marine squadrons (designated VMAQ), have provided this electronic warfare support flying from AMERICA. (USS AMERICA)

VAW-123 & COD



VAW-123, based at NAS Norfolk, Virginia, flies the E-2C Hawkeye as part of CVW-1 aboard AMERICA. As was the case with the Prowlers, nose numbers beginning with 6 are assigned to this unit. The E-2C provides early detection and warning, can control aircraft in the air, and can act as a communications relay station. As a non-combat aircraft, the E-2C remains in the light gull gray over white paint scheme.

(USS AMERICA)

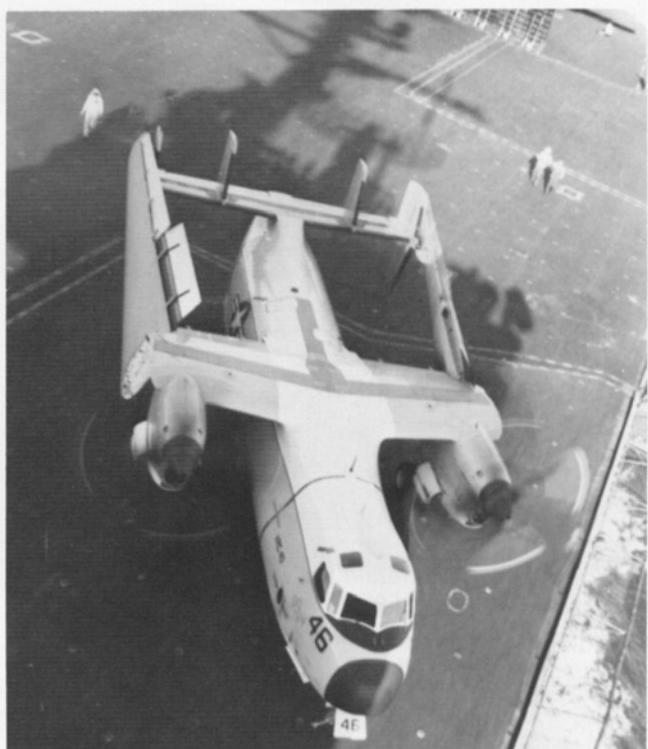


This photograph shows one of VAW-123's Hawkeyes positioning on cat one prior to launch.



Although not actually a part of the carrier's air wing, another aircraft seen frequently aboard all carriers is the C-2A Greyhound. This cargo aircraft flies passengers, cargo, and mail between the carriers and shore bases. Although it may appear that the C-2 and E-2 are basically the same design, there are considerable differences. The fuselage of the C-2 is much wider, and the horizontal tail is flat rather than having a dihedral.

(Sullivan)

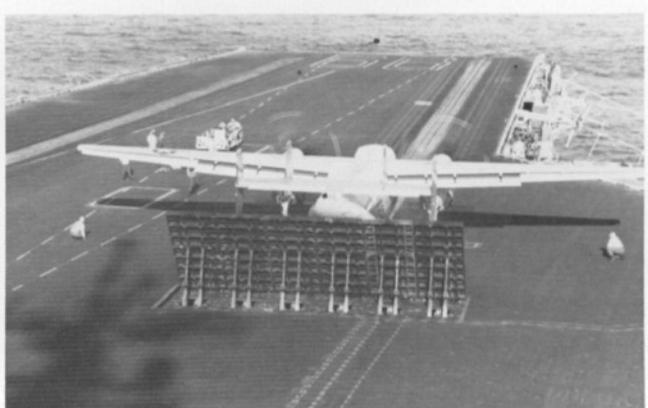


With wings folded, this C-2A is taxiing to a spot near the superstructure for easy unloading of passengers and cargo.



Condensation trails from the tips of the propellers make an interesting corkscrew design in the air as this C-2A catches a wire after touching down aboard AMERICA.

(USS AMERICA)



After discharging passengers and cargo, then picking up more, this C-2A is ready to head back home.

VS-32 & HS-11



VS-32, based at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, flies the S-3A Viking anti-submarine aircraft as part of CVW-1. The S-3As are assigned nose numbers beginning with 7. These two photographs show 710 landing aboard AMERICA, then being backed onto the number-three elevator.

(Both Sullivan)



HS-11 flies the SH-3 Sea King helicopter in two very important missions. One is anti-submarine warfare, and the other is the search and rescue role. Orbiting off the starboard side of the carrier any time flight operations are underway, a Sea King is always ready to immediately rescue air crew in the event of an accident. These helicopters also transfer passengers and cargo between ships at sea and between ships and the shore. Note the small CVW-1 USS AMERICA stenciled above the landing gear.

(Sullivan)



Deck crew personnel are unfolding the rotor blades on 615 in preparation for launch.



Here, 612 takes off to begin a long mission flying orbits near the ship so it will be ready to quickly rescue any personnel in the water should an accident occur during flight operations.

SHIP'S DETAILS

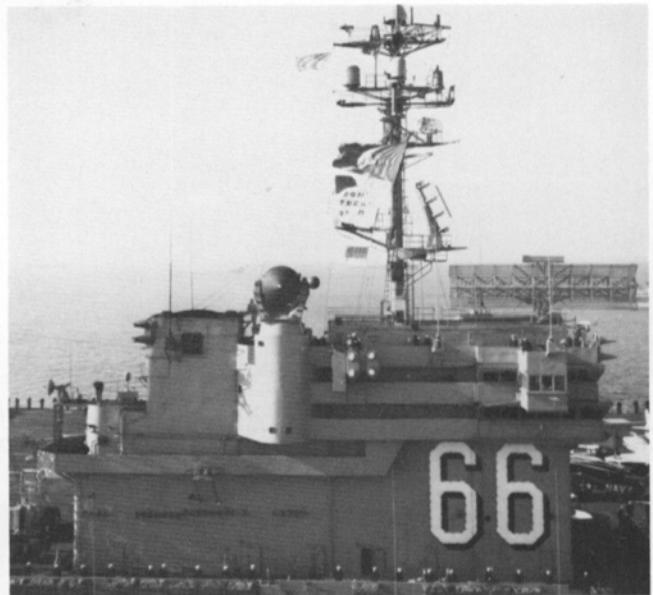


Port side details of AMERICA's superstructure are seen in this photograph that was taken while the ship was still in its final stages of construction. AMERICA was the first conventionally powered aircraft carrier to have its primary flight control station (pri-fly) located above the two bridges rather than being on the aft end of the superstructure. The radar on the mast behind the island is the SPS-30, and an SPG-55 can be seen on the side of the superstructure just aft of the scaffolding. The large cylinders on the flight deck are dead loads used for catapult tests.

(U.S. Navy)



These two photographs show the superstructure as it appears today. The lower portion of the port side and both ends are painted black so that aircraft exhausts will not show. Note that the 66 has been moved to the small stack on the starboard side because of the addition of a Phalanx mount and other gear in its former location forward on the island. The comparison of these two photographs with the ones shown above provides a good look at how the AMERICA's superstructure has been modified and modernized over the years. Also note that the SPS-48 has replaced the SPS-30 on the radar mast behind the island.



The starboard side of the island as originally built is shown in this photograph taken in November 1965. The smaller smokestack that is unique to AMERICA is clearly visible here to the left of the SPG-55 director. The ship's number is located forward on the island so as to make it larger than it would be on the small smokestack. The auxiliary conn station projects out from the bridge.

(U.S. Navy)

SUPERSTRUCTURE





This view of the superstructure was taken from the lowered number two elevator, and shows details of the two bridges and how far pri-fly extends out from the island.

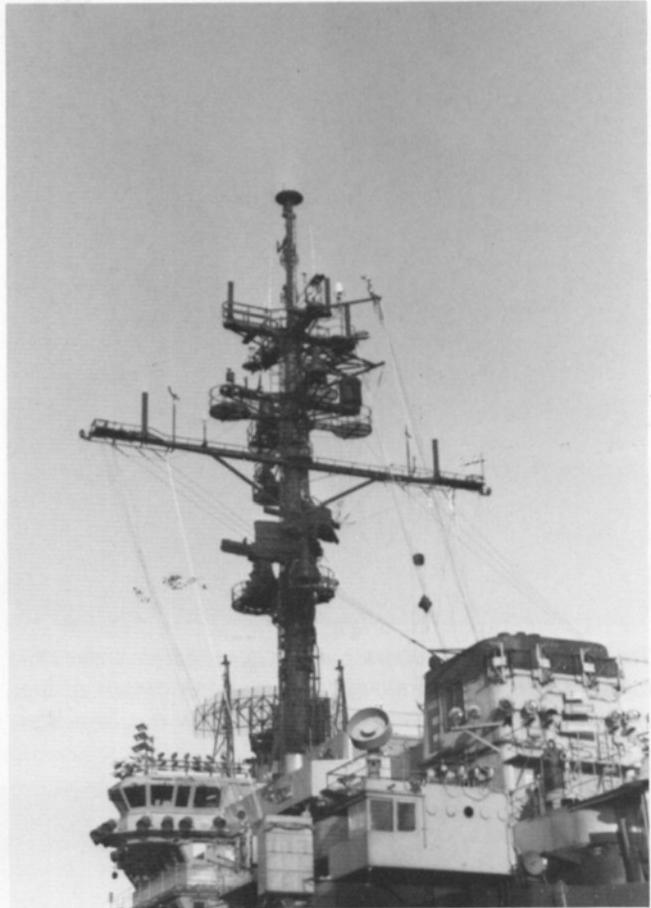


This is the unique small smokestack as viewed from the port side. The ship's horns are attached to the front of it. Cameras are located in the windowed area that projects out over the flight deck, and they film flight operations as they take place.



Details of the forward end of the island below the bridges are revealed in this view. Note the two small glass-covered viewing holes, one low and to the port side, and one higher to the starboard side. Fire hoses, chocks, and other equipment are stored around the base of the superstructure. The commanding officer's name is painted below the wings, and it is Captain Coonan who is seen here jogging past the superstructure on the flight deck.

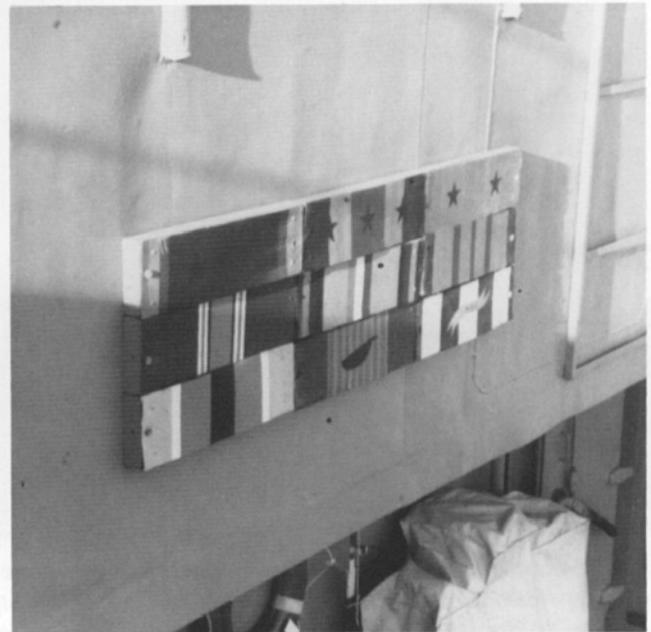
(USS AMERICA)



Top left and right: Details of the mast are illustrated in these two photographs. As is the case with most conventionally powered ships, the mast is painted black so as not to show soot from the smokestack. The photograph at left was taken from the port side, and the one at right was taken from port and behind the mast.



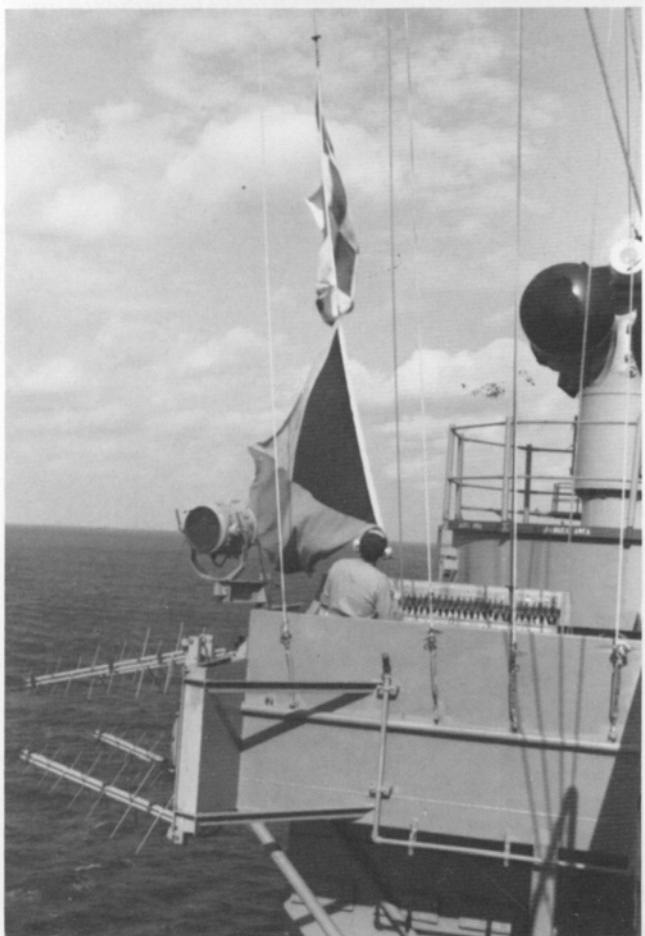
The mast was designed to be hinged downward so that the ship could pass under bridges that were lower than the masthead. The hinge on which the mast is mounted is shown here.



AMERICA's ribbons are displayed on both sides of the island. These are on the starboard side.

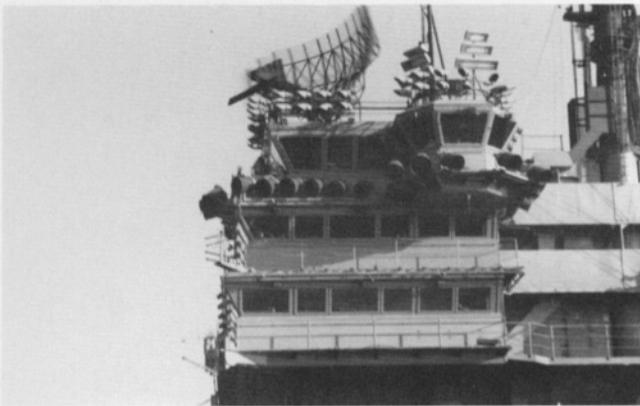


Another view of the starboard side is provided here. Noteworthy is the Phalanx mount with its characteristic white dome. This low view reveals the supporting structure for the Phalanx mount, platforms, and walkways on this side of the island.



Left and above: The flag box on the starboard side is shown in these two views. At left, flags are being hoisted from the box, and the photo above provides a close-up look at the flags stored in the box.

BRIDGE



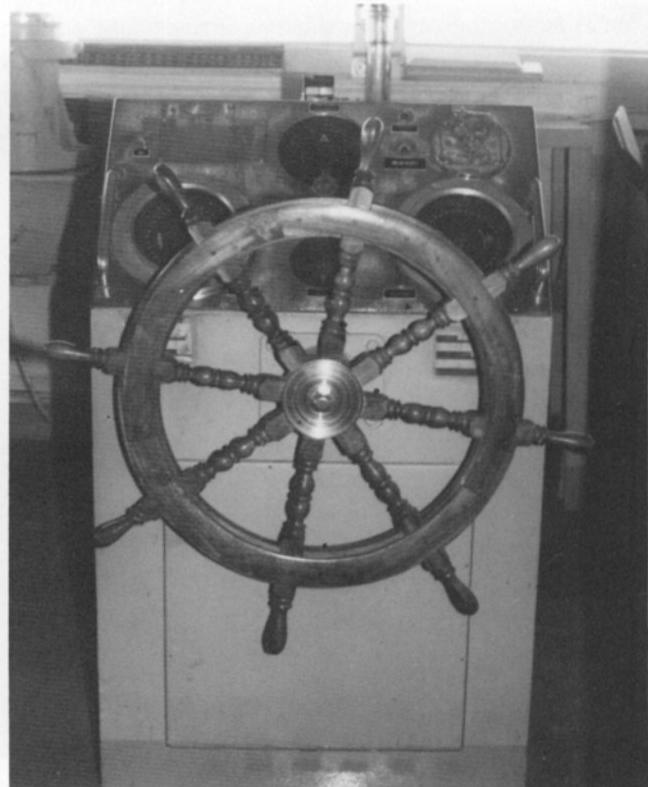
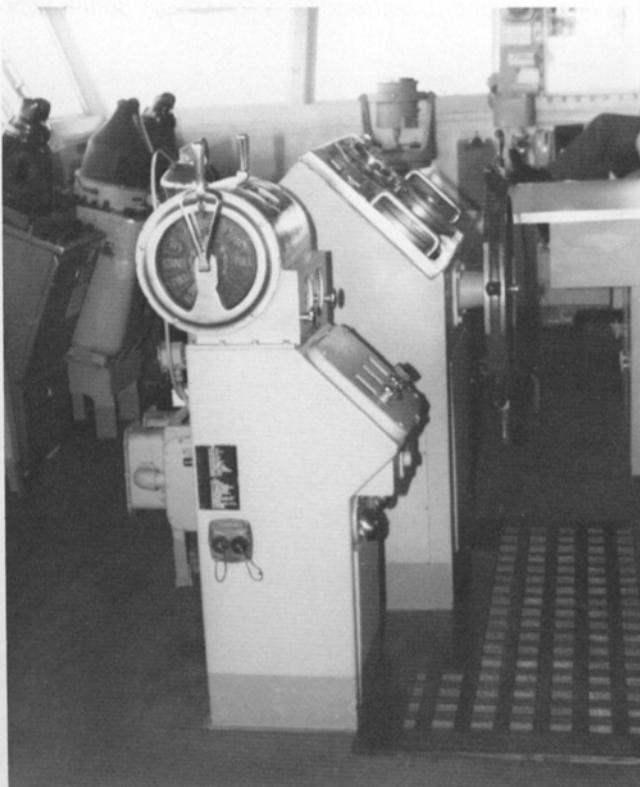
At the forward end of the superstructure are the admiral's bridge, the navigation bridge, and pri-fly stacked in three levels.



These radar scopes are located on the navigation bridge in the forward corner on the starboard side.



The view in the photograph at left looks to starboard from the port side of the bridge, while the photo at right looks to port and slightly aft.

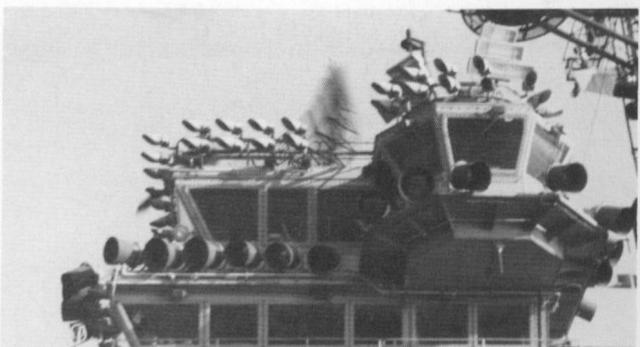
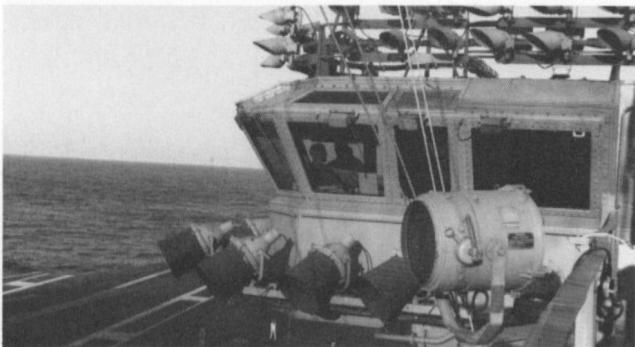


At left is the engine order telegraph, and at right is the ship's wheel.

FLAG BRIDGE & PRI FLY



Both of these photographs were taken on the flag bridge. The one at left shows the admiral's chair from behind, and was taken at the aft end on the port side looking forward. The one at right was taken from the starboard side and it looks to port.



Exterior views of pri-fly are shown here. The photograph at left was taken aft of pri-fly on the 010 level and shows the part that extends out over the flight deck. At right is a close-up of the entire pri-fly exterior with numerous spotlights and loudspeaker systems mounted on and around it.



Interior details of pri-fly are revealed in these two photographs. At left is a look into the area that overhangs the flight deck, and at right is a view looking forward.

CATAPULTS



AMERICA has four C-13 steam catapults, two of which are located in the bow and two on the port waist position. This is the standard location for catapults on all carriers since the FORRESTAL was constructed. As originally built, all could launch aircraft using the bridle system as shown on this North American RA-5C Vigilante. As the nose wheel tow system began to replace the bridle systems, the catapults could be used with either system. But now that the bridle method is no longer used on most aircraft, the Van Velm bridle arrester, or "horn" as it is often called, for catapult number two has been removed. This photograph also reveals one of the shorter jet blast deflectors originally installed on AMERICA. The JBD behind cat one was the first to be increased in size, and more recently, the one behind cat two was enlarged.

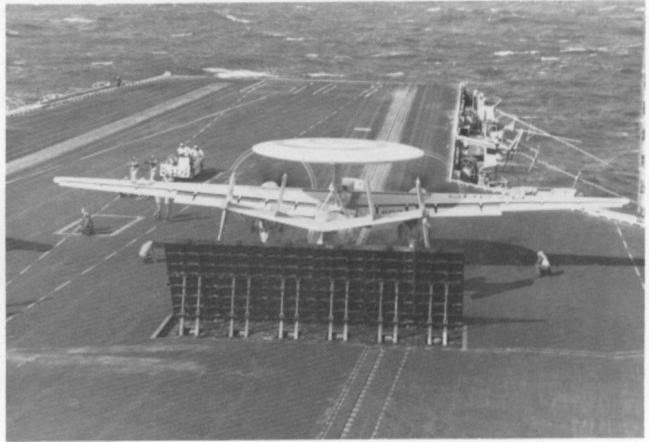
(U.S. Navy)



This view shows cats one (starboard) and two (port). An S-3A Viking is unfolding its wings on cat two with the JBD already raised. An E-2C is taxiing forward and unfolding its wings at the same time as it positions on cat one. The JBD is still in the lowered position since the aircraft has not yet passed completely over it.



This is the one remaining Van Velm bridle arrestor left on the bow, and it serves cat one.



Both of these photographs show details of the raised JBDs as seen from behind. At left is a KA-6D on cat two, and at right is an E-2C on cat one.



The squadron commander's aircraft from VF-103 slowly inches forward as a deck crewman insures that the launch bar correctly engages the catapult. The larger JBD is clearly visible behind the aircraft.



An F/A-18 Hornet is positioning on cat two in this photograph.



The squadron commander's A-6E TRAM from VA-85 receives the launch signal from the cat officer an instant prior to the catapult being fired.

(PH3 Demaar, USS AMERICA)



Deck crew personnel, wearing different colored shirts that denote their jobs, perform a controlled and carefully orchestrated "ballet" that controls the movements of aircraft on the flight deck. Their jobs are critical, and insure that operations on the flight deck are efficient and safe.



The amount of steam pressure required depends on the weight of the aircraft being launched. This is ordered from two positions on the flight deck, one for the bow catapults, and one for the two waist cats. These positions can be closed flush with the flight deck as shown at left, and, when in use, they are open as illustrated at right. On the newer carriers of the NIMITZ class, these positions are covered.



The catapults are fired on command from positions located in the catwalks. One of these is shown in the photograph at left, while at right the "shooter" holds his hands in sight until he receives the command to launch.





The two waist catapults are shown here during night operations. An A-7E Corsair is in tension on cat three with the JBD raised behind it, while an EA-6B Prowler is positioning on cat four beyond it. In the foreground an F-14 Tomcat waits its turn.

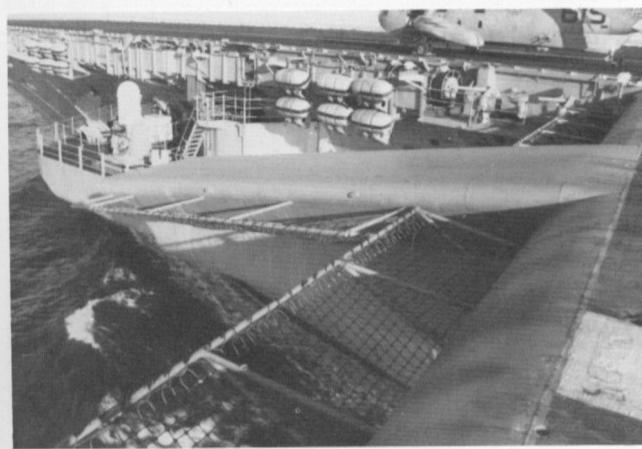


Afterburners scorch the JBD as a Tomcat pilot prepares to launch from cat three.

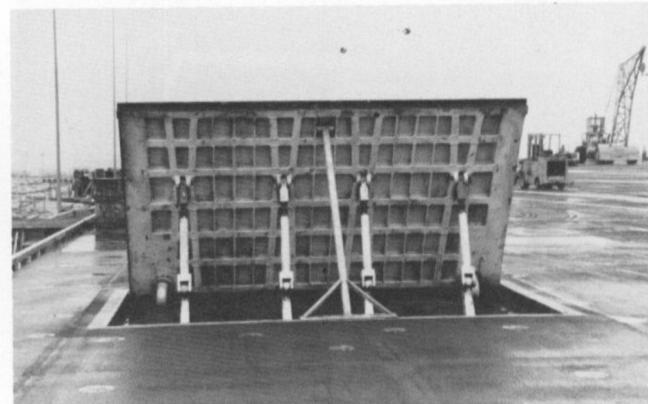


Although not as dramatic as a night launch when it comes to lights and flames, a daytime launch is still awesome when it comes to sound and fury.

(U.S. Navy)



The "horn" or overrun for the Van Vlem bridle arrestor still remains on the angled portion of the flight deck. In all likelihood, it will soon be removed.



The JBD for cat four is smaller in width than the other three. It is shown here from behind while the ship was in port. The longer middle support is not part of the JBD, but is only a brace to hold it open for maintenance work.

USS AMERICA IN COLOR



AMERICA is shown here as built in October 1968 with Terrier missile launchers on her quarters. Note that the flight deck is a lighter color than the landing area, and the elevators appear to be another color. (U.S. Navy)



This photo reveals the colors for the starboard side of the early superstructure and radar mast. (U.S. Navy)

Right: Special holiday greetings from AMERICA are lit up for all to see in this colorful night shot taken on December 16, 1968, while the carrier was at her home port of Norfolk, Virginia. (U.S. Navy)



Dated March 11, 1968, and taken off the port bow, this photograph reveals more details of AMERICA as she appeared in her initial configuration. (U.S. Navy)

FLIGHT OPERATIONS

LAUNCHING AIRCRAFT



Flight operations aboard an aircraft carrier are like none other anywhere else in the world. They are a constant action and interaction of aircraft and men, and of sights and sounds. Being at sea brings a completely different dimension to what may seem almost commonplace on land. An observer, no matter what his vantage point is, does not watch flight operations, he experiences them!

(PH1 Wood, USS AMERICA)



Working around the catapults provides a free steam bath, but almost every inch of skin is protected on all personnel working on the flight deck. Here an F-14 is being directed on to cat two.

(PH3 Cichonowicz, USS AMERICA)



This beautiful time lapse exposure records the night departure of an F-14 from cat three.

(PH3 Demaar, USS AMERICA)



At left, an F/A-18 Hornet is readied for launch from cat one, while at right crewmen hustle to perform their various duties. The man holding the numbers is telling another crewman the weight of the aircraft so he can order the proper amount of steam pressure.



RECOVERING AIRCRAFT



With all personnel, aircraft, and equipment behind the red and white foul line, an F/A-18 passes over the fantail as the pilot aims for the wires.
(PH1 Wood, USS AMERICA)



This is the squadron commander's aircraft for VF-33 just prior to catching a wire for a successful recovery.



This A-6E TRAM from VA-85 has come to a complete stop after catching the number four wire.



On occasion an aircraft will miss all of the wires, and this is called a bolter. Since the pilot applies full throttle at the time he hits the deck, the aircraft simply flies off the angled deck and goes around to try again.

FLY-AROUND



Taken from almost directly overhead, this dramatic photograph provides a good look at the layout, details, and colors of the flight deck. It is reproduced as large as possible to show the details and layout to best advantage.



Port side colors are revealed here. The photographs on this page, as well as the one on the previous page, were taken from one of HS-11's SH-3 helicopters.



Above: This is the starboard side. The line of men across the flight deck is conducting a FOD walkdown to look for any debris that could enter and damage a jet engine.



Right: This stern view provides a look at the fantail. It clearly illustrates the angles at which the catapults are set into the deck, and it is interesting to note just how far cat four is located out on the port overhang. It is very near the edge of the ship.

DETAILS IN COLOR



Taken in port during a major yard period, this photo shows the four five-bladed propellers and one of the two rudders. The two propellers on the port side turn counter-clockwise, while the two starboard propellers turn clockwise as viewed from the rear.

(U.S. Navy)

This is the Fresnel lens system which is located on the port side of the ship. Pilots use this system of lights to line up a proper approach to land aboard the carrier.



This is one of the radar scopes in the Combat Direction Center aboard AMERICA.

(U.S. Navy)



This photograph was taken in October 1969, and shows LT Robert Hockman (left), AC1 E. R. Lee, and AC3 G. A. Miller manning radar scopes in the Combat Direction Center.

(U.S. Navy)

WEAPONS SYSTEMS



The original missile armament installed aboard AMERICA was the Terrier. Here, one of these missiles is being launched from the port quarter during training exercises. Based on the tail codes on the aircraft and the date of the photograph (1970), the carrier was operating in the Pacific Ocean enroute to her second deployment off Vietnam when this photograph was taken. The Terrier launchers were later modified to fire the Standard missile. (U.S. Navy)



The Terrier and Standard systems were replaced with the Sea Sparrow missile which is now the missile armament for U.S. carriers. This photograph, dated August 6, 1986, shows a missile being launched from the starboard quarter. Newer versions of the launchers have since been installed. (USS AMERICA)

Right: One of the ship's three Phalanx 20mm gun systems is shown here during firing exercises. The photograph was taken looking down on the Close-In Weapons System. (U.S. Navy)



SUPERSTRUCTURE & RADARS



The design of the superstructure, details, and colors are all revealed in this excellent photograph taken almost head on from the flight deck level. Note how thin the base of the superstructure is when compared to the much wider overhanging bridges and platforms.



The aft end of the island is visible here as is the radar mast behind it. Note how the black paint on the lower portion of the superstructure extends around on to the aft end.

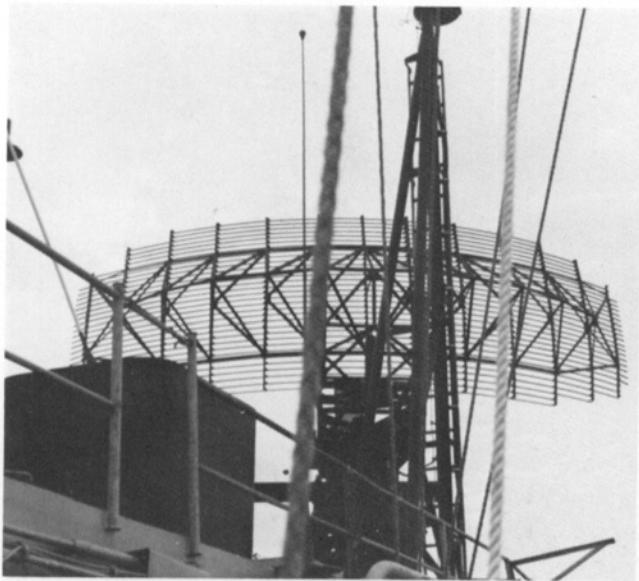


Work was being done on the island when this photograph was taken as the ship steamed toward its home port of Norfolk, Virginia. More colors of the superstructure and radars are visible here.

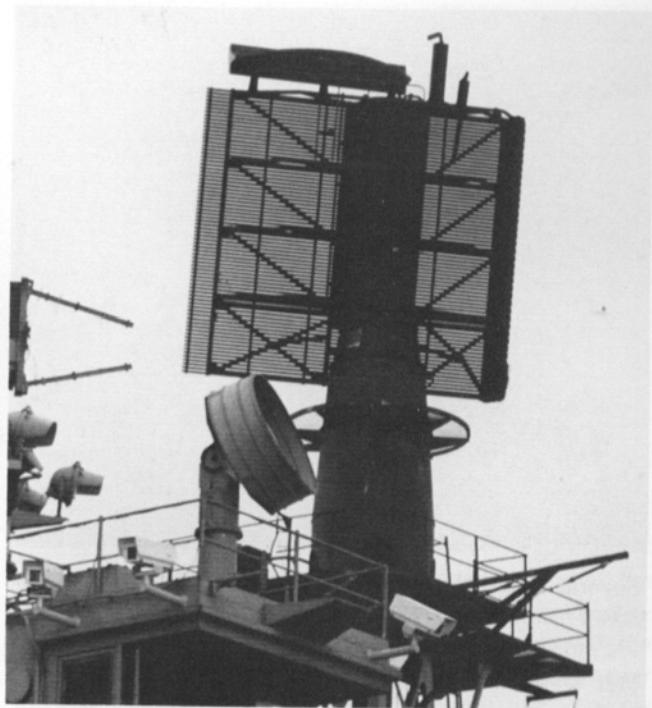


This view looks forward at the aft end of the superstructure and the radar mast. The partially lowered number three elevator is in the foreground.

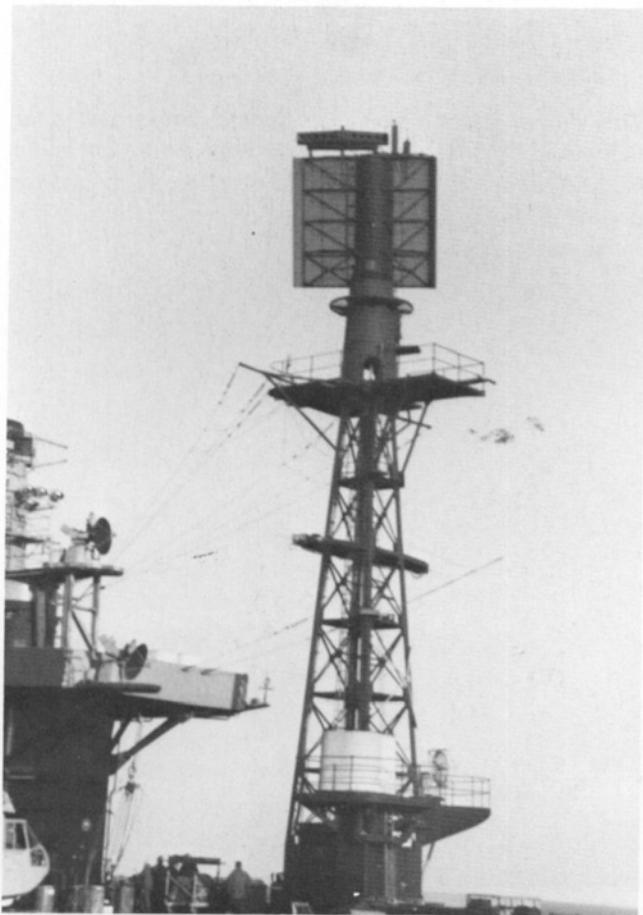
RADARS & OTHER ANTENNAS



This is the AN/SPS-49 radar which is located above pri-
fly and the bridges at the forward end of the superstruc-
ture. It is used for long range air search.



This is a close-up view of the SPS-48C which is located
atop the radar mast behind the island. (U.S. Navy)



The entire radar mast and its SPS-48C are visible in this
photo. Note the SPN-41 radar on the pedestal below it.



The AN/SPN-41 Automatic Landing Control Radar (com-
monly referred to as the "Spin-41") is located on its own
short pedestal just aft and to port of the radar mast.



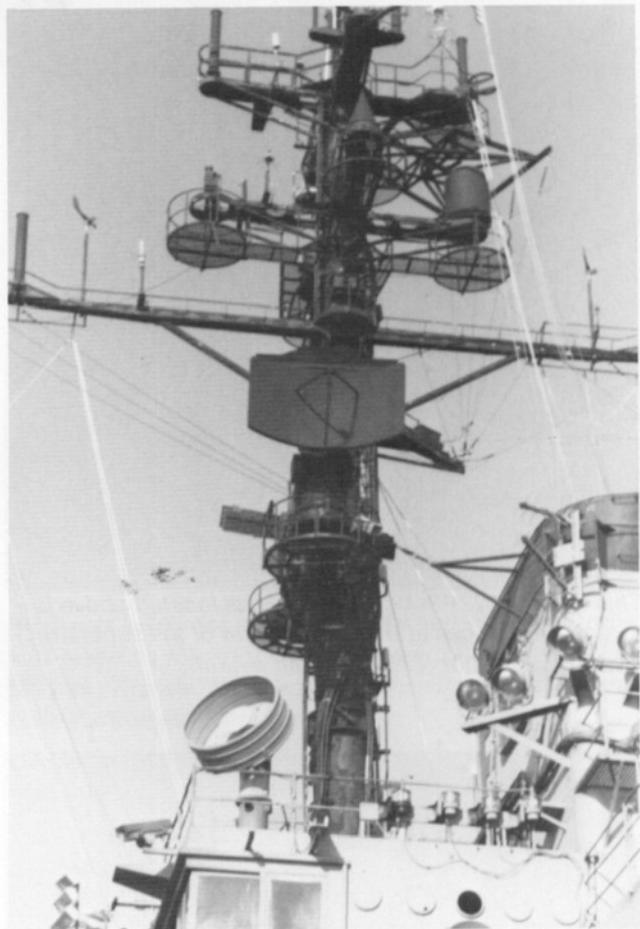
Several radars are visible in this photograph that was taken from behind the island. The two similar dishes that are mounted one above the other are AN/SPN-42 radars that are associated with the automatic carrier landing system. The smaller dish to the left of the lower "Spin-42" is the AS/SPN-44 that measures the airspeed of incoming aircraft as they are making their approach to land. The circular antenna that is mounted on top of the camera position to the left is the AN/WS-3, called the "Whiskey-3" antenna. It is a VHF communications antenna.



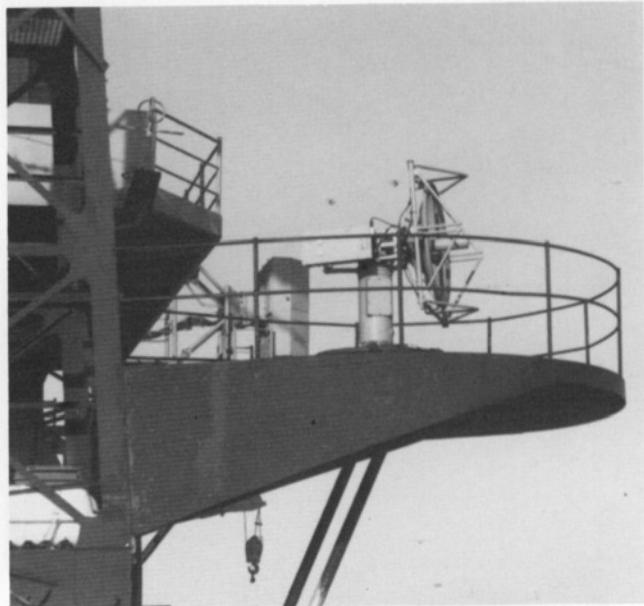
Located forward on the mast, and just a little higher than the AN/SPN-43, is the antenna for the Mk 48 Mod 0 target acquisition system (TAS).



This is the AN/SPN-43 close-in low-level air search radar. It is located low and aft on the mast, and can be seen in the top right photograph on this page.



This view shows the mast from behind. The largest radar is the AN/SPN-43, which is shown from a different angle in the bottom left photograph on this page. Many smaller antennas and weather instruments are located on the mast and yardarm.



The SMQ 6 weather satellite tracking antenna is located on a platform that is mounted to starboard on the radar mast behind the island.



Mounted above the auxiliary conn station on the starboard side of the superstructure is a Mk 78 Mod 0 NATO Sea Sparrow fire control radar. This radar locks on to the target and guides the missile to it.



Another Mk 78 Mod 0 radar is mounted further aft on the superstructure. This position was formerly occupied by an SPG-55 Terrier guidance radar. Like the radar in the photograph to the left, this radar also is a guidance radar for the Sea Sparrow system. These two Sea Sparrow radars usually are associated with the launcher located forward on the starboard side. Radars for the two launchers that are mounted on the quarters are positioned in close proximity to their respective launchers.



Center left and right: "Slick-17" electronic warfare measures support antennas are located on both sides of the ship. These antennas, officially designated AS-2963/SLQ-17, intercept and analyze radio and radar signals. They are also used to transmit deceptive radar signals from the ship.



Right: Also located on both sides of the ship are SMQ-10 or "SMACK-10" weather satellite tracking antennas. This one is located at the flight deck level, next to the island, on the starboard side.

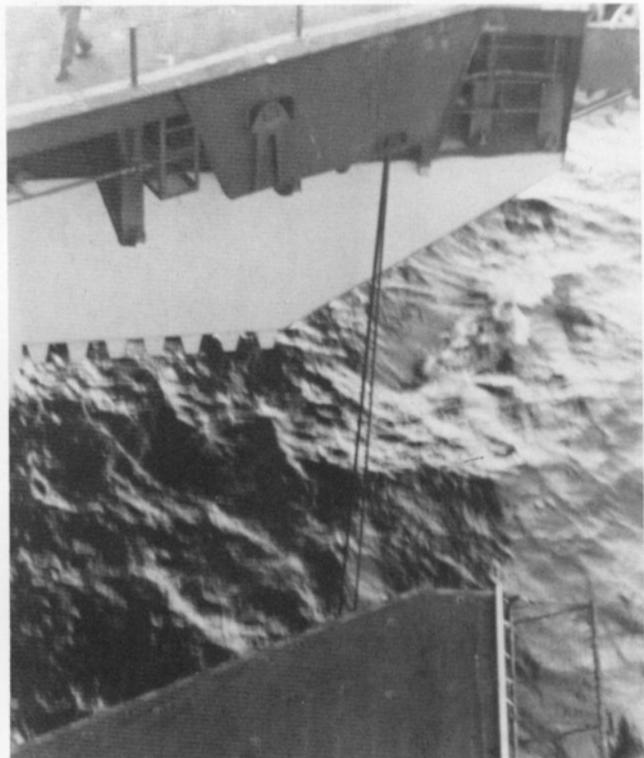
ELEVATORS



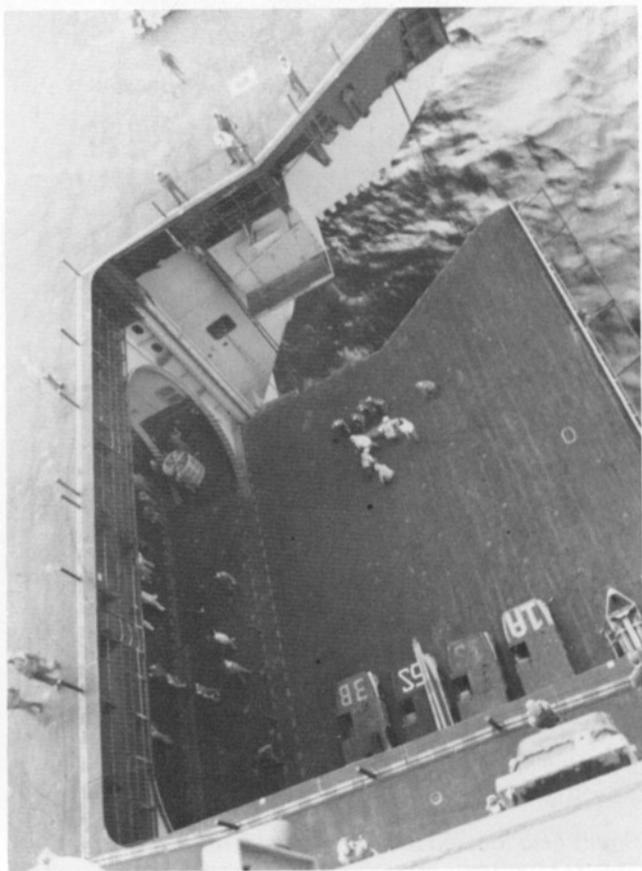
AMERICA has four aircraft elevators all located on the deck edge. Three are on the starboard side, and one is on the port side. Of the three on the starboard side, two are located forward of the superstructure as seen in this view. This arrangement of elevators is an improvement over that used on the FORRESTAL class, because all four elevators can be used when aircraft are recovering as well as launching. This is not the case with the arrangement used on the four FORRESTAL class carriers. The number one elevator is forward, and the number two elevator, most of which is visible in this photograph, is just in front of the superstructure.



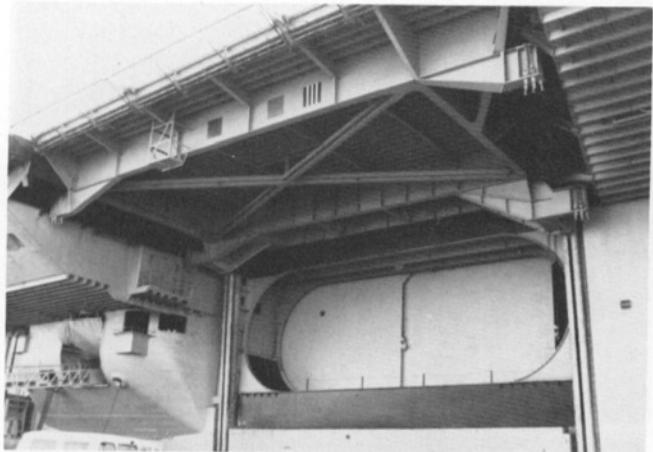
An F-14 Tomcat waits on the number one elevator for its turn on the cat.



Cables help support and move the elevators, and are located at four positions on each elevator. This is a close-up of one set of cables on elevator two.



This is elevator two in the lowered position. Two sets of cables at the forward edge of the elevator are visible.



The number one elevator is shown in the raised position in this view. Structural members under the elevator are visible, as is the elevator's opening to the hangar deck. The sliding doors that close off the opening are almost fully closed.



The wire safety netting on the outer edge of each elevator is attached with hinges that permit it to be dropped out of the way when necessary. Here a moveable gangway is positioned over the elevator.



The number three elevator is shown here. Again, note how the safety netting has been dropped down out of the way.



The number four elevator is the only one on the port side. This view looks down at the number four elevator in the lowered position.

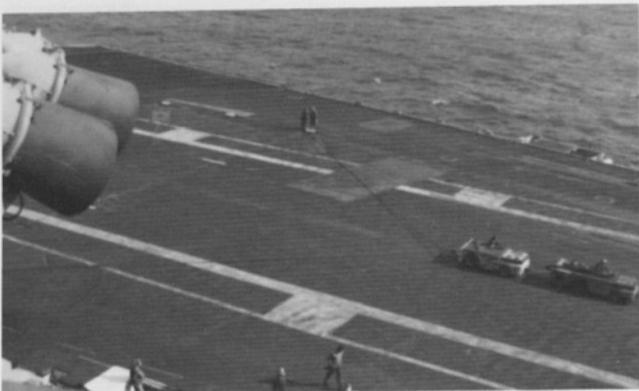


This interior view shows one of the sliding doors that seal off the openings to the elevators at the hangar deck level. These are usually left open for ventilation if the weather is not too cold.



This view looks aft from the forward end of the opening for the number two elevator. The sliding doors are to the right, and the lowered elevator is to the left. The warning strips are red and yellow.

LANDING AREA & ARRESTING GEAR



Two of the aircraft tractors pull on the number four arresting cable prior to the start of flight operations. They will pull the cable out as far as it will go.



Once the cable has been pulled by the tractors, crewmen inspect it for any damage.



Details of one of the fair lead sheaves are visible here. The cross-deck pendant had been removed when this photograph was taken. The rectangular area in the background is a terminal impact pad that helps protect the flight deck from wear.



Aircraft are parked just behind the foul line next to the superstructure while recovery operations take place. Hence an accident could damage not only the landing aircraft but several others as well. There is very little room for error.



This is what it looks like when everything works as it should at the instant the hook engages the wire. This photograph shows an A-6E TRAM engaging the number two wire. The cable has been picked up as the main gear touches the deck. In the background are three of the fair lead sheaves on the port side. The leaf springs that hold up the cross deck pendants are visible supporting the number three wire. Three of the terminal impact pads are also visible.

(Sullivan)



When everything goes as planned, the aircraft touches down and engages one of the wires as this F-14 from VF-33 is about to do here.

(Sullivan)



It then is brought to a stop by the arresting gear, and the hook is disengaged. The pilot then quickly taxis out of the landing area to clear the deck for the next aircraft.

(Sullivan)



But sometimes there is a problem that prevents a normal arrested landing. One alternative is to use the crash barricade which is being prepared by crewmen in this photo.

(U.S. Navy)



Once it is ready, the barricade is erected to the vertical position, and it engages the aircraft as shown here. Usually relatively minor damage is sustained by the aircraft. This F-4J is from VF-92, and it made this barrier landing aboard the AMERICA while the ship operated on Yankee Station on July 21, 1970.

(U.S. Navy)



After making a barricade recovery, an A-6 Intruder is removed from the landing area by the aircraft handling crane which is known as "Tilly." The right main landing gear on the A-6 would not extend, and therefore necessitated the barricade recovery on January 29, 1968.

(U.S. Navy)

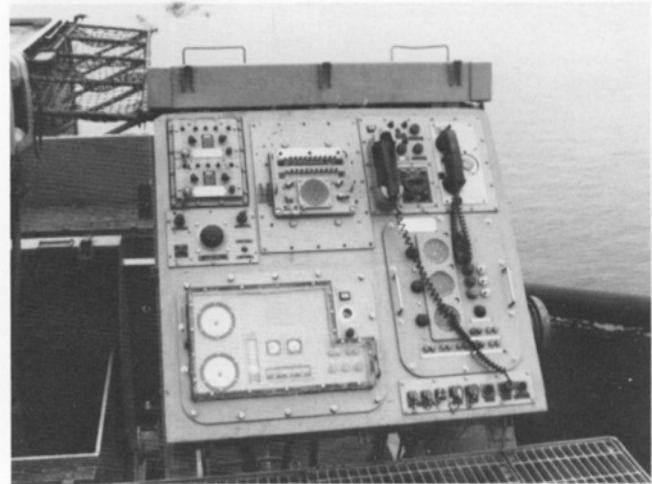
LSO PLATFORM



The LSO platform is located on the aft port side of the flight deck, as it is on all U.S. Navy aircraft carriers. When not in use it can be folded down, and the HUD is retracted, as shown in the photograph at left. At right, the LSO platform and its associated equipment are ready for use.



This is a close-up of the HUD showing its screen, speaker controls, and phone. However, the glass has not been raised.



Details of the console, located to the right of the HUD, are seen in this view.



The HUD and console are shown ready for use in this photo. Note that the HUD's glass has been raised.



Although the console is covered and the HUD is retracted, the rear shield that protects the LSOs from the wind over the deck (WOD) is shown in its raised position. Four windows are located in this shield, and the bracing on this side is visible. Crewmen are performing usual preventative maintenance after flight operations have been completed.

QUARTERDECK



The quarterdeck is where VIPs and officers come aboard or leave the ship. It is located on the starboard side between the number one and number two elevators. The quarterdeck on AMERICA is considerably different than the ones on the KITTY HAWK and CONSTELLATION, particularly the upper portion that supports the flight deck overhang. It is more like that found on the NIMITZ class carriers. Also note the cables running into the ship at two different locations.



Center left: Once inside the opening, this is what the quarterdeck looks like. The officer on duty is present, and because this photograph was taken on a cold day in January, he has a large heater to help keep him warm.

Center right: On the forward wall inside the quarterdeck is this plaque which names the previous ships of the fleet to be named AMERICA.

Right: The quarterdeck exits into the hangar bay, and just inside is this ceremonial area.



HANGAR BAYS



This is what the hangar deck looks like when it is crowded with aircraft. There isn't much room to move around. Moving one aircraft can mean having to move several others. It simply is not possible to place the entire air wing in the hangar bays at one time, so, whenever the entire wing is aboard, some aircraft are always on the flight deck. (U.S. Navy)



The empty hangar bays look quite spacious, as is evident from this view that was taken from the aft end looking forward. However, being located within the hull of the ship, it is considerably smaller than the flight deck with its massive overhangs. Further, the hangar deck does not extend the full length of the ship. This is particularly true up front where it does not extend very far forward of the number one elevator.



This photograph was taken at the forward end of the hangar deck and looks aft. Modelers will want to note that the deck is the same dark gray non-skid surface as the flight deck, while the sides and overhead are white.



Hundreds of colorful flags and pennants hang in the hangar bays. These include flags of countries, states, and U.S. territories, as well as signal flags.

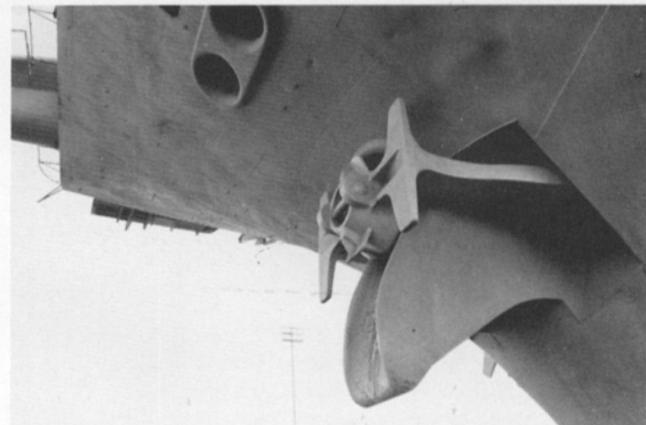


The ship's boats and launches are stored at the aft end of the hangar deck along with lots of other equipment. When this photograph was taken, they were undergoing a lot of maintenance to include fresh coats of paint.

FOC'SLE & ANCHORS



The foc'sle (a shortened form of forecastle) in AMERICA is shown in these two photographs. The view at left looks aft from the forward end, and the one at right looks forward from the aft end. The two anchor chains are clearly visible. Each link in the chain weighs 391 pounds.



AMERICA has two anchors, each weighing thirty tons. One is located in the usual place on the starboard side of the bow, but the other is positioned on a stem hawsepipe directly on the front of the bow. This arrangement was necessitated by the sonar dome below the waterline that originally housed an SQS-23 sonar. However, the sonar has since been deleted. The positions of both anchors can be seen at left. The forward anchor is raised, and the starboard anchor is in the lowered position as it usually is when the ship is in port. At right is a close-up view of the forward anchor

(Left author, right U.S. Navy)

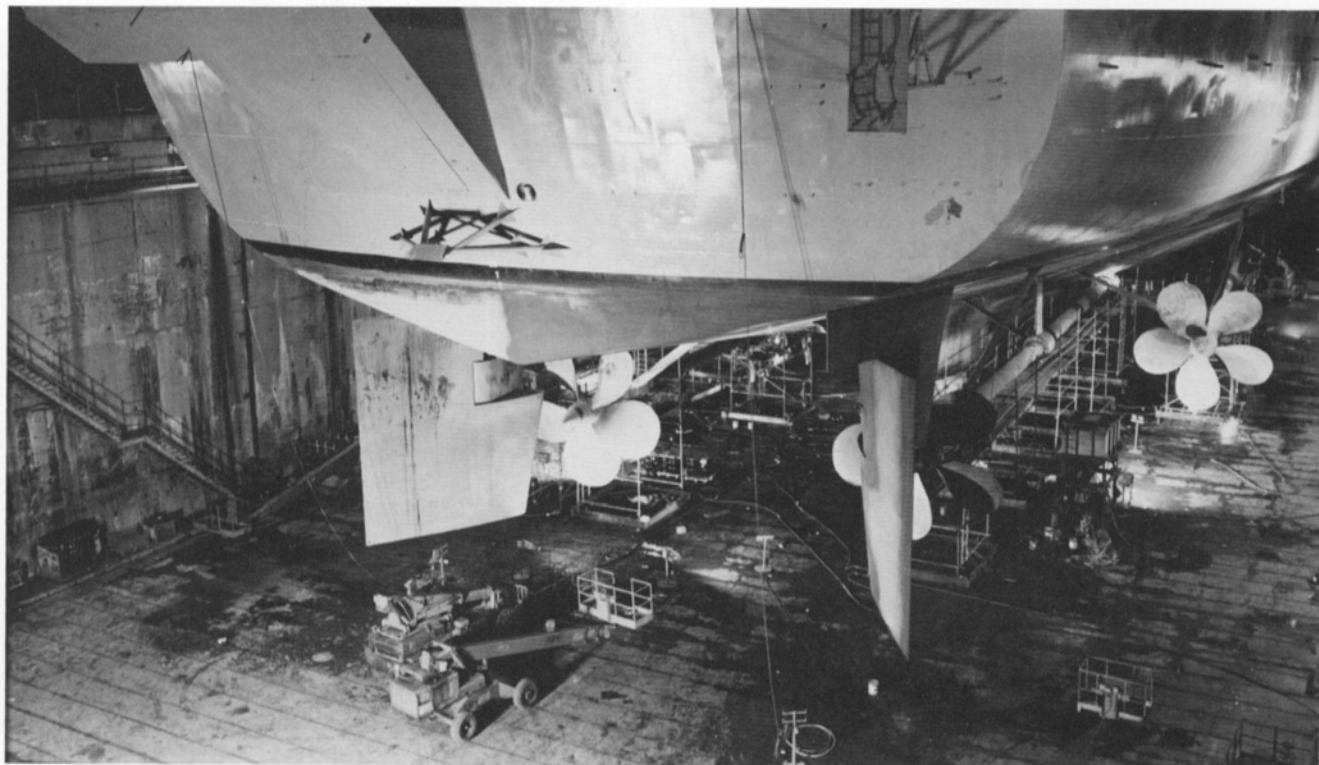


Here the starboard anchor is seen in the fully raised position while the ship is in drydock. (U.S. Navy)



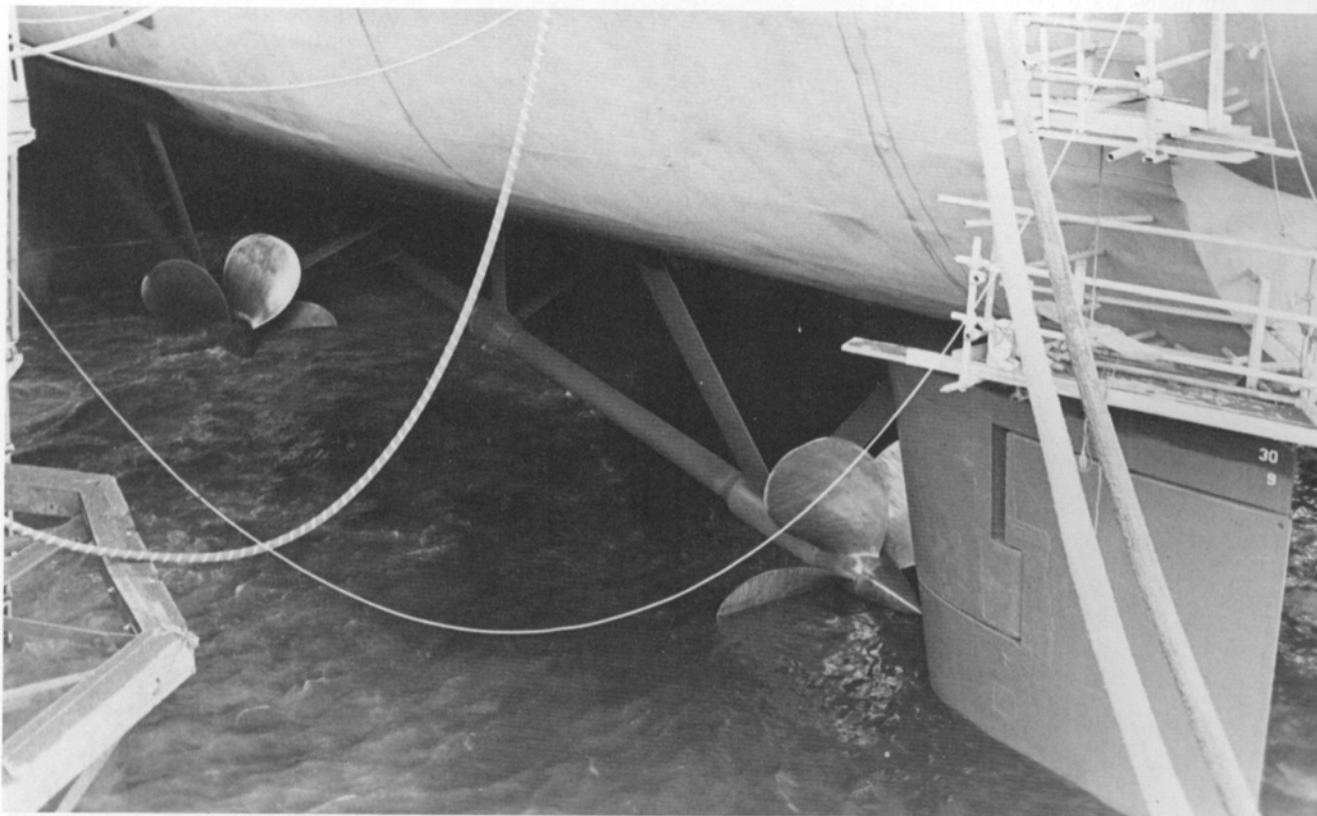
One of AMERICA's crewmen is dwarfed by the sheer size of the one of the ship's anchors. (U.S. Navy)

PROPELLERS & RUDDERS



An unusual nighttime photograph, taken while the carrier was in drydock, provides a look at the two rudders and three of the four five-bladed propellers. Each propeller is twenty-two feet in diameter and weighs 69,300 pounds. Both rudders are turned outward for maintenance, but this would not be a usual configuration for the rudders to be in.

(USS AMERICA)



After the maintenance has been completed, fresh paint applied, the propellers cleaned and polished, and all other work completed below the waterline, the water is allowed to flood the drydock and again float the ship. At this point, the water level is almost up to the propeller shafts.

(USS AMERICA)

STARBOARD SIDE DETAILS



All of the major details on the starboard side of the ship are visible in this excellent photograph that was taken during one of AMERICA's port calls. Moving from bow to stern, it can be seen that the starboard anchor is lowered. The shape of the sponson for the Sea Sparrow missile system on the starboard bow is visible, as are the locations for the three starboard elevators. Note how the areas around the elevators are rounded to reduce resistance in heavy seas. The area under the superstructure is also rounded for the same reason, and the openings in it are for underway refuelings and boarding and leaving the ship when it is in port. The largest opening at the lower aft end of this area contains a whale boat. The ship's crane is positioned just aft of the number three elevator, and aft of it is the sponson that mounts a Sea Sparrow missile launcher. When the ship is making a port visit such as this, its boats and launches shuttle the crew to and from the shore.

(USS AMERICA)

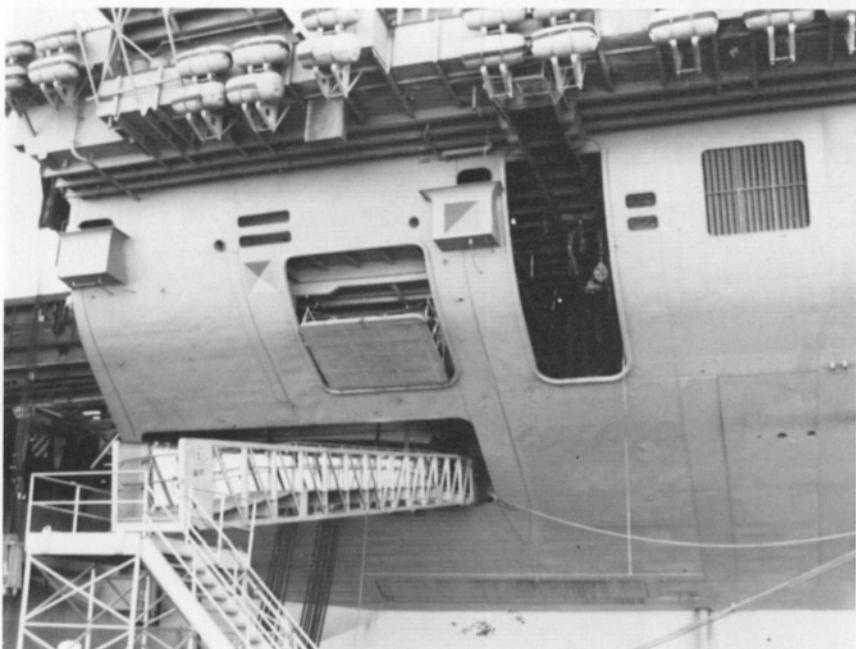


The supporting structure for the flight deck overhang forward of the number one elevator is visible here. The barrel-like devices attached along the edge of the flight deck are self-inflating life rafts. Again, note how the blisters in the hull around the elevators are rounded so as to reduce resistance as well as damage in high seas.

This close-up provides a look at the sponson that mounts a Sea Sparrow launcher on the starboard bow.



The overhang that supports the superstructure and the area beneath it is shown in this view. This is another place where AMERICA differs from previous supercarriers. Notice how this area is rounded at the forward end and at the top. On earlier carriers this was angular with flat facings.



This close-up reveals details of the aft end of the same area under the overhang. Inside the large vertical opening are fuel lines used when the ship is refueled while it is underway. A small retractable platform is in the opening next to it, and this is where crewmen stand during refueling operations. A gangway leads to a large rectangular opening where the bottom of a whale boat is partly visible. Enlisted men usually come aboard and leave the ship here.



Details of the ship's crane are visible here, as is the entire sponson on the port quarter. The crane can be used to lift aircraft, the ship's boats, and supplies of all types on to and off of the number three elevator.



Taken from the air, this photo provides a different view of the same area seen at left. The Sea Sparrow launcher and radars are more clearly visible here.

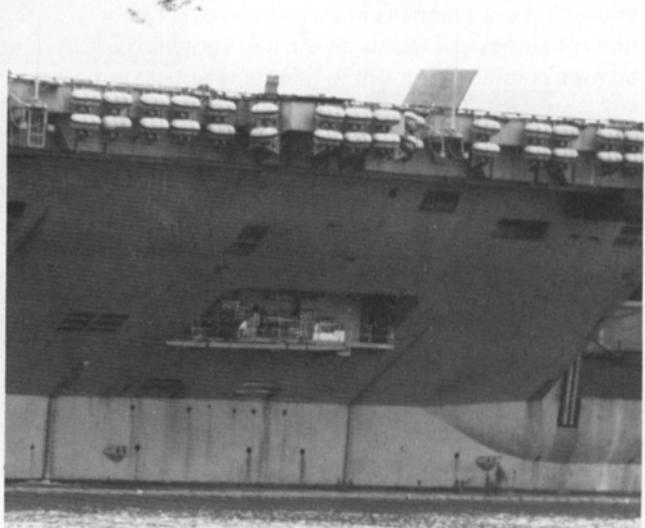
PORt SIDE DETAILS



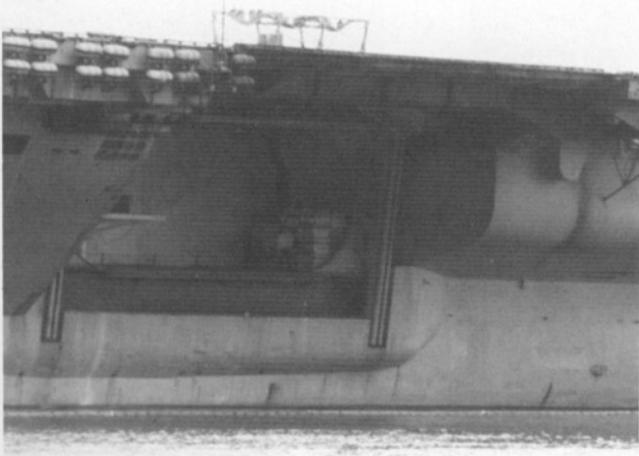
At left is a photograph of the port bow. Several details are visible to include the sponson that supports a Phalanx mount, and the bridle catcher located on the angled portion of the flight deck. Also noteworthy is the rounded leading edge of the area beneath the flight deck overhang. At right is a close-up of the sponson and the 20mm Phalanx CIWS.



There are two large cutouts in the area beneath the angled portion of the deck. The forward cutout has a boat deck located within it, and a whale boat is visible on its davits.



The aft cutout is considerably smaller as shown here. It is located just forward of the number four elevator.

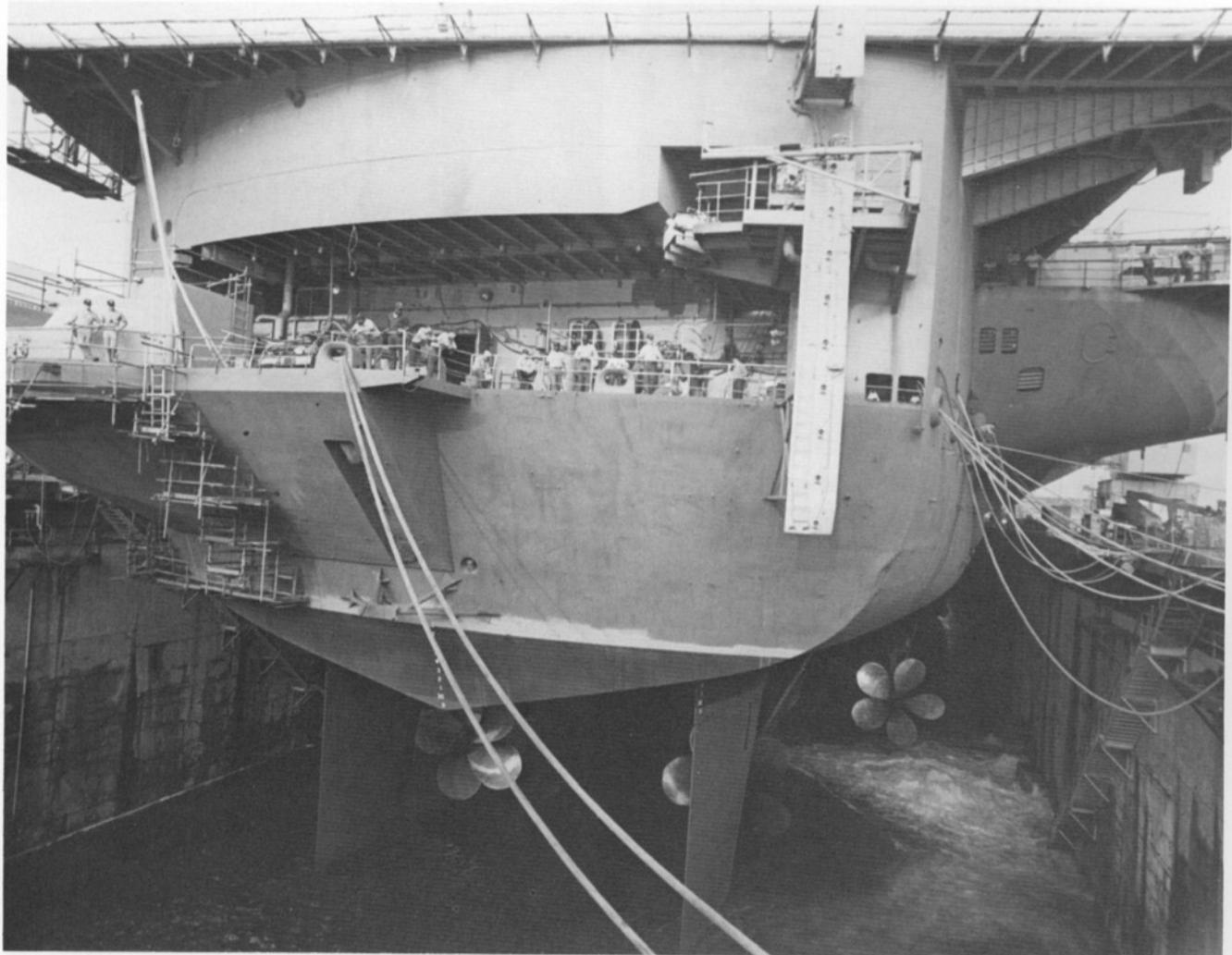


The number four elevator is visible in this view. It is in the raised position, and the doors to the hangar deck are closed. Note the fared blister around the lower portion of the opening to the hangar bay.



This aerial view shows details of the port quarter to include the Sea Sparrow launcher and radars, the supporting structure beneath the stowed LSO platform, and the two small platforms sponsored out from the ship just aft of the missile launcher.

FANTAIL



Many details of the fantail are visible in this photograph that was taken in drydock. Although there is no date indicated on the photo, it was taken before the installation of the Phalanx gun system.

(U.S. Navy)



These two photographs were taken in January 1989, and show the fantail as it appears today. The Phalanx mount is clearly visible on the port side in both views.

WEAPONS

TERRIER & STANDARD



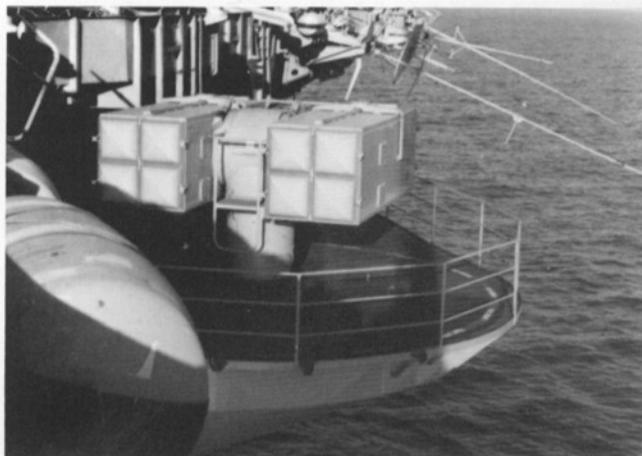
Terrier surface-to-air missile launchers were originally mounted on both quarters. The one on the starboard side was a Mk 10, Mod 3 launcher used to launch the RIM-2F Terrier with semi-active homing guidance, and the one on the port side was a Mk 10, Mod 4 launcher with beam riding RIM-2D missiles. The magazines for each launcher could carry up to forty missiles. The port launcher is shown in the photograph at left, while the starboard launcher is at right.

A Terrier is launched from the starboard launcher on February 7, 1968, during refresher training conducted in the Caribbean Sea. (U.S. Navy)



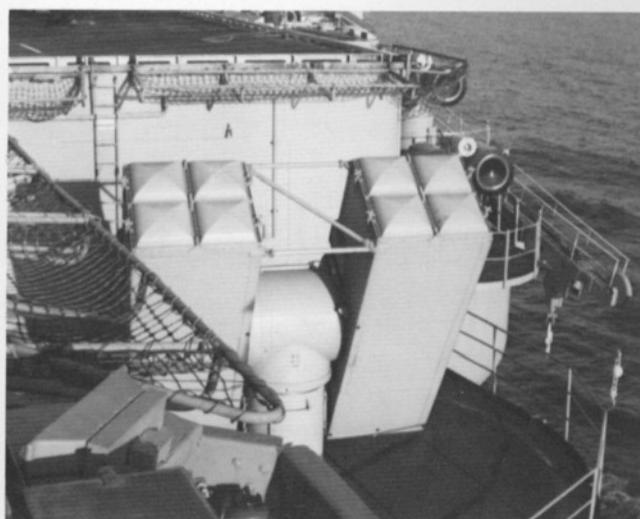
Both Terrier launchers were later modified to carry the Standard missile. This Standard has been loaded on the port launcher. (U.S. Navy)

SEA SPARROW



The Sea Sparrow missile system has replaced the two Terrier launchers, and a third one has been added forward on the starboard side. The Sea Sparrow is a follow-on system to the Basic Point Defense Missile System (BPDMS). Eight missiles are loaded in each launcher for a total of twenty-four. One problem with this system is that it is very difficult to reload the launchers. At left is a close-up of the forward launcher on the starboard side as viewed from behind, and at right is the same launcher firing a practice missile during training exercises.

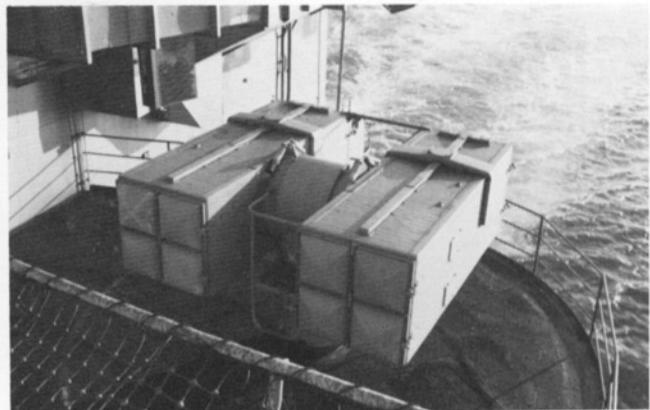
(Left author, right PH2 Weidner, USS AMERICA)



These two views show the Sea Sparrow launcher on the starboard quarter.

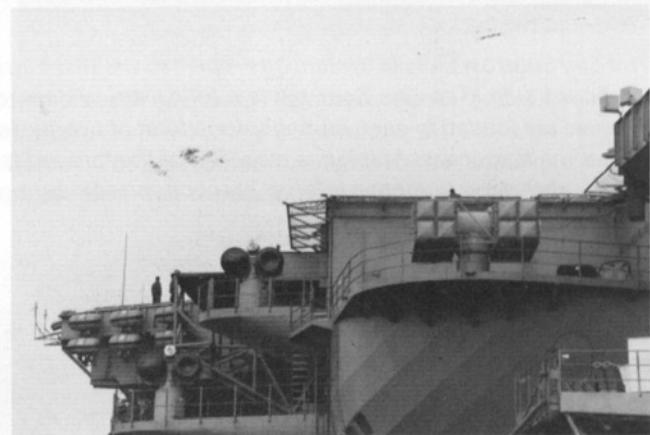
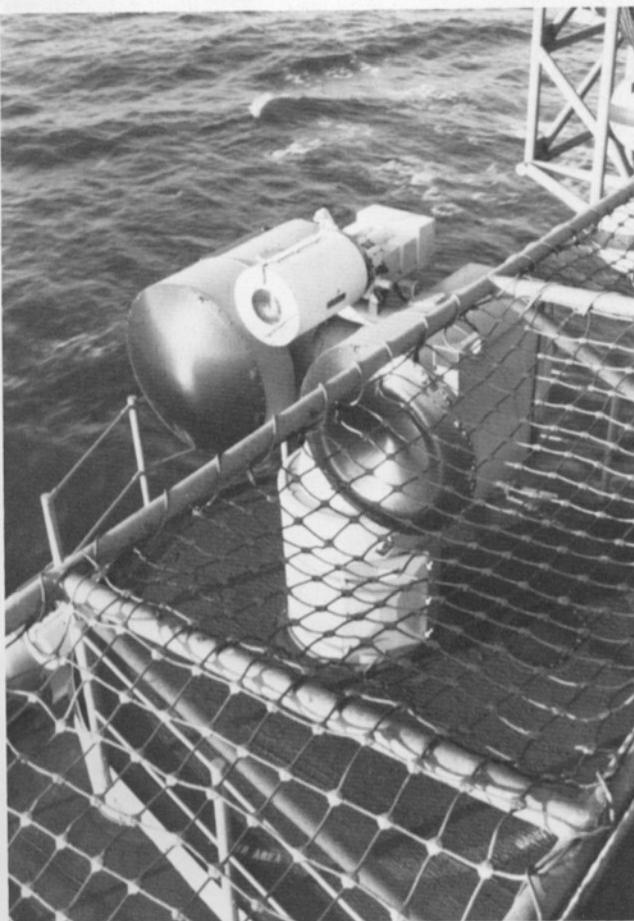


These photos also show the aft starboard launcher as viewed from the pier. The close-up at right reveals Firebee drone kills painted on the side of the launcher.



Above left and right: Details of the Sea Sparrow launcher on the port quarter are visible in these two views. The photo at left shows the front of the launcher. The two guidance radars are visible to the left. The photograph at right is looking down at the launcher from behind.

Right: The same launcher and its two guidance radars are seen here, as photographed from the shore while the ship was in port.



This close-up of one of the guidance radars reveals many of its details. The convex side of the antenna (to the left in this photograph) is the transmitter side, while the other side is the receiver.

Each launcher has a dual system of guidance radars. The two associated with the port side launcher are shown here, as viewed from the flight deck. The backs of the radars are visible from this angle. These are Mk 78 Mod 0 continuous wave (CW) radars.



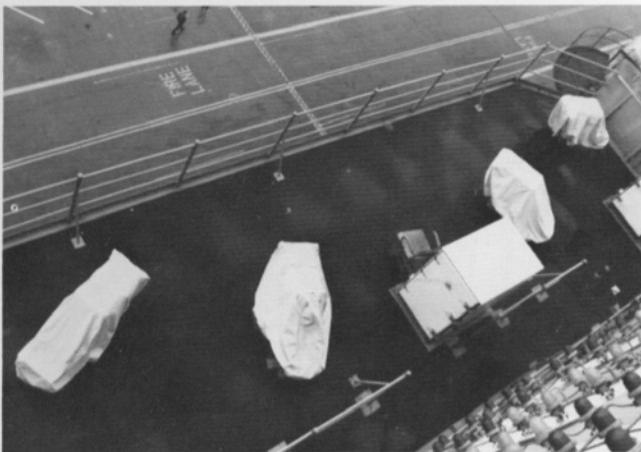
AMERICA and ENTERPRISE were the first carriers to receive the Phalanx gun system in the spring of 1980. Three systems were installed aboard each carrier. On AMERICA, one is on the port side forward, a second is on the starboard side of the superstructure, and a third is on the port side of the fantail. This last mount was originally on the aft end of the port quarter, but has since been moved to its present position on the fantail. Phalanx is a gun system used against aircraft and missiles at ranges of 500 to 1500 yards. On top is a white dome with search and tracking radars. An M61 20mm Gatling gun is mounted under the dome, and below that is a 1000-round drum magazine. The new round has high kinetic energy to destroy or prematurely burst a sea-skimming missile. The entire system moves as a single unit, quickly engaging targets automatically. It is highly reliable, and has proven effective even with the presence of ECM. The radar tracks both the target and the rounds so as to quickly make adjustments to bring rounds on the target. Here the aft mount is firing during training exercises.

(PH2 Kozoh, USS AMERICA)

Right: This is the mount that is located on the forward port side. In the foreground is a tripod mount for a .50 calibre machine gun with a shield in place. The gun is not in position. Several of these mounts are located at various positions around the ship, and can be used to repel attacks by terrorists when the ship is at anchor or in port.



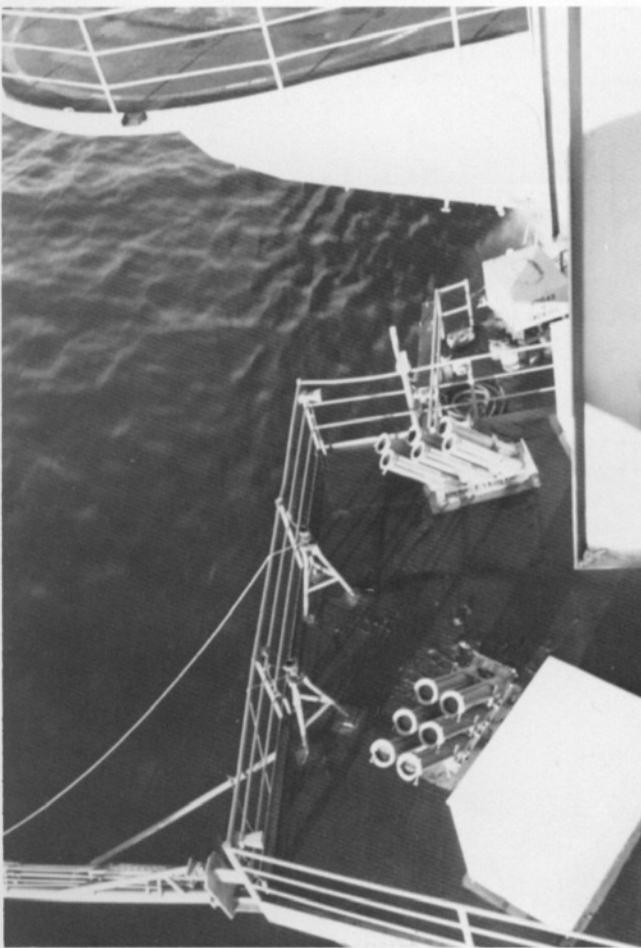
CHAFF LAUNCHERS



The Super RBOC (Rapid-Bloom Offboard Chaff) system is not actually a weapon, but yet it forms an important part of the ship's defenses. These launchers can fire chaff that serves as a radar decoy as well as a chaff/flare combination that can be used against missiles with either radar and/or infrared systems. This photo shows four canvas-covered launchers on a platform that is attached to the starboard side of the superstructure.



One of the launchers seen in the photo at left has been uncovered to show its details.



This photograph looks down at a small platform mounted low on the port quarter. Two RBOC launchers can be seen on the platform as well as tripods for two .50 calibre machine guns.



In this view of the sponson for the forward port Phalanx gun system, two RBOC launchers can be seen beyond the gun barrels.

CDC & AIR OPS



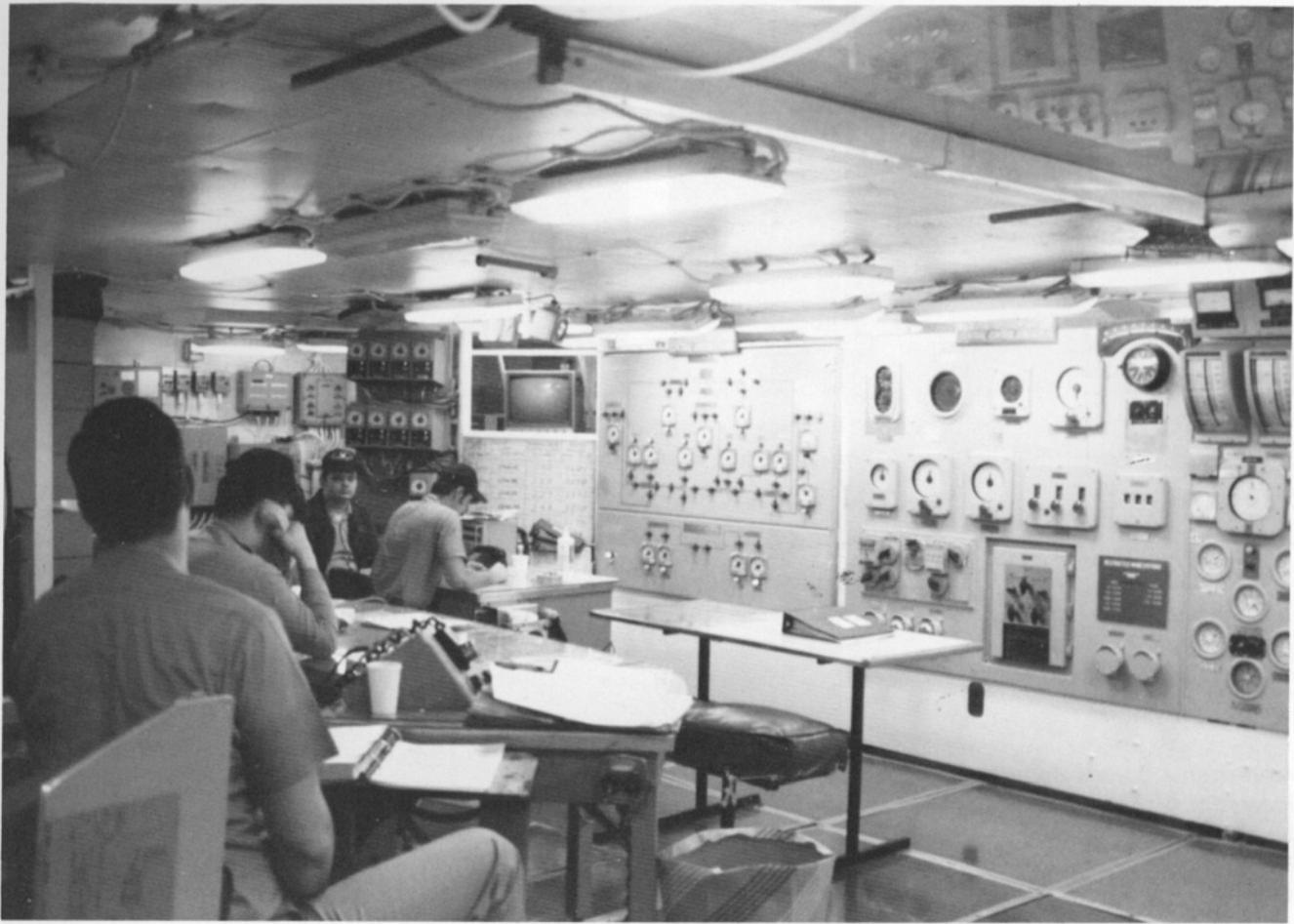
The nerve center of the ship is CDC, which stands for Combat Direction Center. Both of these photographs, taken while the ship was in port, show CDC during quieter times, and reveal the numerous display panels, screens, and positions manned when the ship is "in action." Threat analysis, the ship's weapons systems, and much more are coordinated and controlled from CDC. Three Large Screen Display (LSD) boards are mounted vertically below a series of TV monitors. The three stations in the background and to the right in the photograph at left are OJ-451 consoles that are used for different purposes. The left one is the targeting acquisition system, the middle one is the ship's weapons coordinator, and the one on the right is the SAC "strike" console. The photograph at left looks from left to right, while the one at right looks from right to left.

More status boards and displays are located in Air Ops. Here, the status of all aircraft that are flying missions is monitored. Aircraft are controlled from here anytime they are outside the pattern, while inside the pattern they are under the control of pri-fly. This photograph was taken while the ship was in port and shows Air Ops as it appears today.



This photograph shows Air Ops during flight operations, and it was taken at an earlier date than the one above. It was also shot from further back to show more of the consoles and radar scopes. (PH3 Gaspard, USS AMERICA)

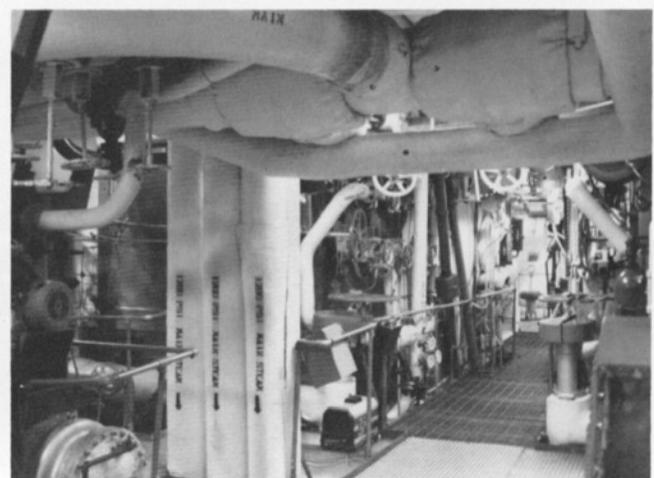
BELLOW DECKS



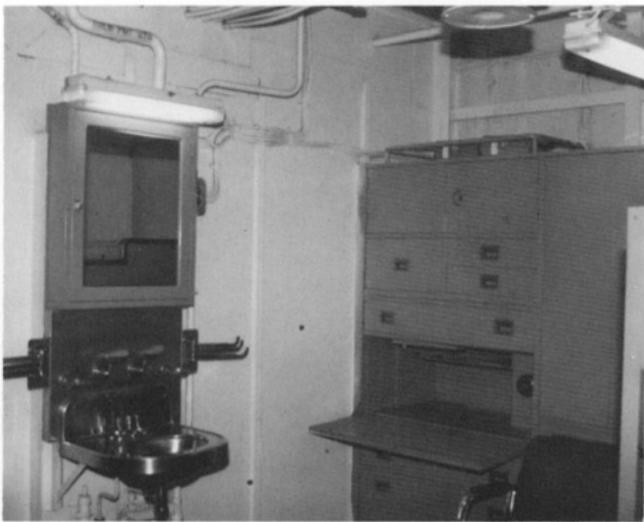
This is Damage Control Central, and it is one of the most important areas aboard the ship. It is also referred to as DCC or simply as "Central." The boilers are controlled from here, as is the electrical system. Also controlled is water for the steam that is supplied to the catapults, the ship's alarm system, fire pumps, and fire mains. The ship's list is also monitored and controlled from this room. The ship can list because of damage, but the list also changes during day-to-day operations. As aircraft are moved around the flight deck and hangar bays, a great deal of weight is shifted fore and aft and from side to side. This is countered by pumping large amounts of sea water between huge tanks to keep the ship level. For example, if several aircraft are spotted forward during landing operations, sea water would be pumped aft. After the recovery, aircraft could be moved aft for the next launch, so the sea water would be moved accordingly. If the ship received battle damage on the starboard side and took on water, the list could be controlled by counter-flooding tanks on the port side.



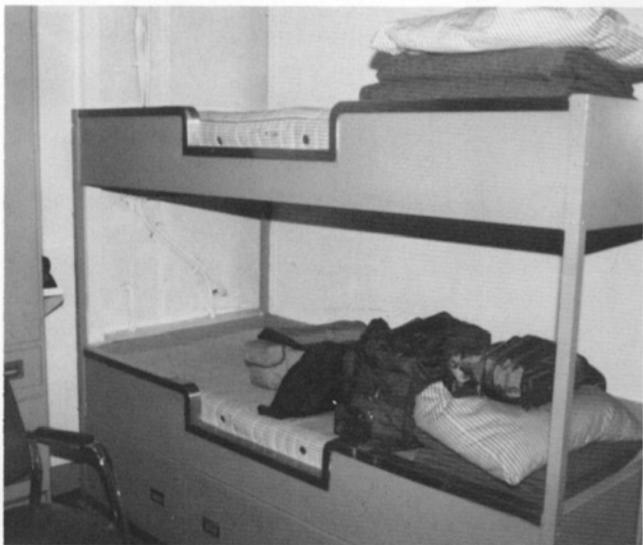
The medical facilities aboard carriers are quite complete, and include this operating room where surgery is performed.



This photograph was taken in machinery room #4. It supplies steam throughout the ship for the catapults, laundry, galleys, showers, and the ship's turbines.



These two views show the inside of a stateroom to which two officers would be assigned. The photo at left was taken from the door and looks into the room, while the view at right was taken from the desk seen in the left photo, and looks back toward the door. The door is just out of the photo to the left side.



A double bunk bed is in the room as shown here.



Right: Enlisted quarters are not as spacious nor well equipped. Berthing is a series of triple bunk beds arranged by the dozens. Privacy is provided only by curtains on the beds. Each man has lockers with just enough room for his uniforms and a change or two of civilian clothing.
(U.S. Navy)



Officers eat their meals in two adjoining mess areas. This one is the more formal dining area. Service in the evening is provided by waiters, and there is a cafeteria line at the noon meal.



The informal area, known as the "dirty shirt" mess, is where officers in their work uniforms can eat. However, officers in many different types of uniforms can usually be seen eating here. Service is cafeteria style.

The enlisted mess is cafeteria style and very informal. There are separate dining areas for higher and lower ranking enlisted personnel.



WALK-AROUND



Ordnance elevators bring various forms of ammunition up from the magazines. In the photograph at left, one of these elevators is shown on the flight deck. A red and yellow border marks off the elevator. At right is one of the elevators in the raised position with AIM-7 Sparrow missiles. Note that the flight deck portion hinges up rather than being part of the elevator itself.

(Left author, right U.S. Navy)



Flammable materials are stored in these three lockers which have white doors to reflect heat. They are located on the edge of the flight deck next to the forward end of the superstructure.

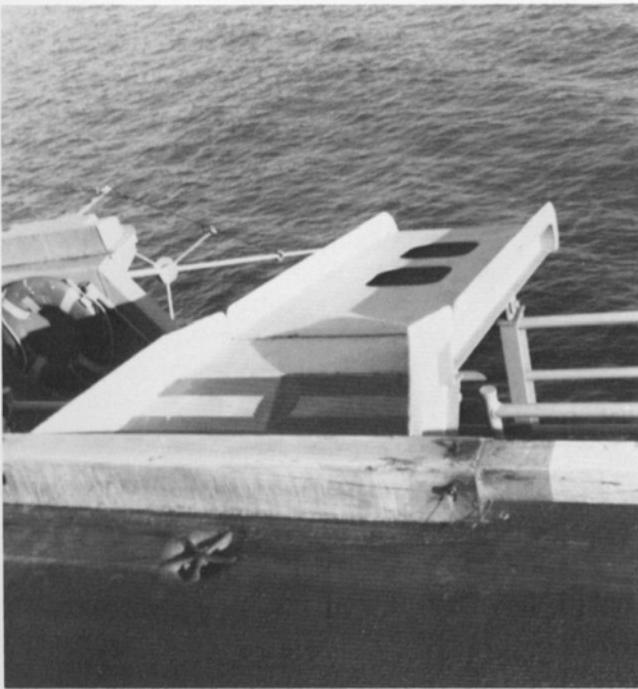


The cube-shaped items that are located beside the aft end of the superstructure are jettisonable lockers that contain pyrotechnic material that is used on the flight deck. They can easily be jettisoned in an emergency, particularly a fire. The barrel-shaped items are more of the self-inflating life rafts.

This is some of the "yellow gear" used on the flight deck. At the very top of the line is a steam cleaner. Parked immediately below that is a huffer, which is a tractor with the equipment to start an aircraft. Below that are two duces which supply electrical power. Below the duces is a twin agent fire-fighting unit with both AFFF and PKP extinguishing agents. Next is another duce, and at the bottom of the photograph is a tractor with a huffer unit to start aircraft.



The catwalk that runs along the forward port side of the flight deck is shown here. Two saluting guns are in the foreground and hoses can be seen in the background. Some hoses are for refueling aircraft, while others are for fighting fires.



At various points around the flight deck are these chutes. In the event of a fire on the flight deck, ordnance and other materials can be jettisoned over the side.



This is the catwalk along the forward starboard side of the flight deck.



Two more saluting guns are located in the catwalk on the forward starboard side. The item located between the guns is a Platt TV camera with infrared lights. This camera and others like it around the flight deck are for recording flight operations both day and night.



This is the lower starboard side of the superstructure. Note that it is not painted black like the other three sides. Stretchers are stacked vertically on the superstructure.

MODELERS SECTION

To date, there have been two kits issued that claim to be models of the USS AMERICA. These kits were released by Arii and Monogram, and both are in 1/800th scale--approximately. Unfortunately, neither of these represent AMERICA, and the fact is that there are no models of AMERICA available in any scale. The Arii kit is based on the nearly identical KITTY HAWK and CONSTELLATION, and the Monogram kit is of the unique JOHN F. KENNEDY. However, at one time or another, this Monogram model of KENNEDY has also been released as KITTY HAWK, CONSTELLATION, and AMERICA. Hopefully, some kit manufacturer will release all of the carriers in the U.S. Navy in a common scale, taking into consideration the differences between ships in the same class. A little planning when the kits are designed will mean that this can be done with a minimum of tooling costs. But these manufacturers must realize that even when two ships are in the same class, particularly aircraft carriers, they still usually have some important differences, and this must be taken into consideration. But displaying all of the U.S. Navy's carriers together in one scale would make a very impressive collection of models.

In our opinion, the smallest scale in which a model aircraft carrier should be molded is 1/700th or 1/720th scale. But this brings another problem of plastic ship modeling to light. Some models are in 1/700th scale, while others are in 1/720th. There is a very small amount of difference between the two, but it would be much better if the kit manufacturers agreed on one or the other and made their smaller ship models to a common scale so that they could be displayed together. Considering the large number of 1/700th scale ship models already available, this scale would probably be the better choice as plastic ship modeling's smallest scale. For a medium size model, carriers in 1/500th scale are even better, and offer a good trade off between being big enough for detailing and small enough to fit in a reasonable space once they are completed. The large 1/350th scale is also nice, but building a carrier in this scale, such as Tamiya's ENTERPRISE, is a major undertaking, is very expensive, and takes a lot of space to display the model once it is finished. It would take far more room than many modelers have to display a collection of 1/350th scale ships. We think the best bet is the 1/700th and 1/500th scales if a collection of carriers (or other ships for that matter) is to be built, and we hope that kit manufacturers will soon start a complete line of these carriers. The larger 1/350th scale can be reserved for impressive single ship models rather than for a collection of models.

Unless the modeler is willing to build a model of AMERICA completely from scratch, there is really only one way to go, and even then, it requires an effort that is almost as extensive as building from scratch. Since this book is on AMERICA, we will take the rest of this modelers section to explain how to build a model of AMERICA using existing kits. As a minimum, building this model will require one of the Arii kits that claims to be AMERICA and

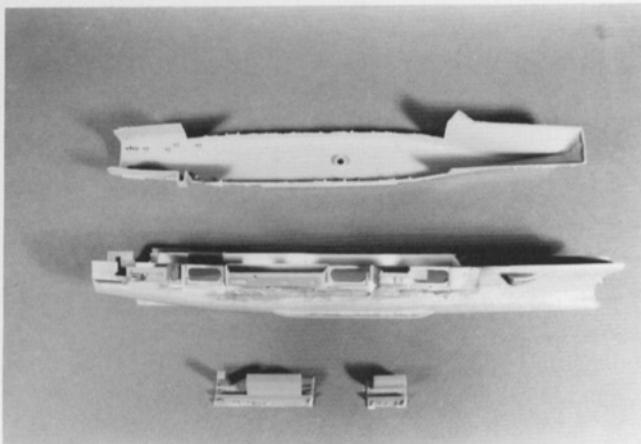


This is the Arii kit in 1/800th scale. Unfortunately it represents the CONSTELLATION or KITTY HAWK. It does not build into an accurate model of AMERICA. In fact, there is no model of the AMERICA available in any scale.

one of the Monogram kits mentioned above. Any issue will do since they are all the same. As stated earlier, both are approximately 1/800th scale, and we think this is just a little too small for a carrier. However, with Arii's other carriers in this scale (some released under the Otaki name) as well as Monogram's KENNEDY, the modeler can build a fairly complete collection of U.S. carriers. So far there has been no member of the FORRESTAL class issued in this scale, and the CORAL SEA also has not been added to Arii's series. All other carriers except AMERICA have been issued in this scale, and we will explain how to build that now.

The first place to start is with the hull. The Arii hull will form the basis for the model, but almost half of it must be cut away. On each side, cuts should be made vertically at the forward-most point where the sponsons that support the flight deck overhang begin. The aft vertical cut should be just aft of the number three elevator on the starboard side and the number four elevator on the port side. The horizontal cut should be at the waterline, and it will extend between the two vertical cuts on each side. What the modeler will be removing on the starboard side is all three elevator openings, the quarterdeck, and the sponson or supporting area under the superstructure that includes the refueling deck. On the port side, the number four elevator opening is removed, as is the entire area under the angled portion of the flight deck. Once this is done, the corresponding pieces should be cut out of the hull of the Monogram kit. Careful measurements should be taken to make sure that these pieces fit the holes in the Arii hull as closely as possible. If anything, cut these pieces a little too large so that they can be filed down. If they are too small, they will require a lot of extra filling and sanding. The photographs in this modelers section will help illustrate what is being explained here.

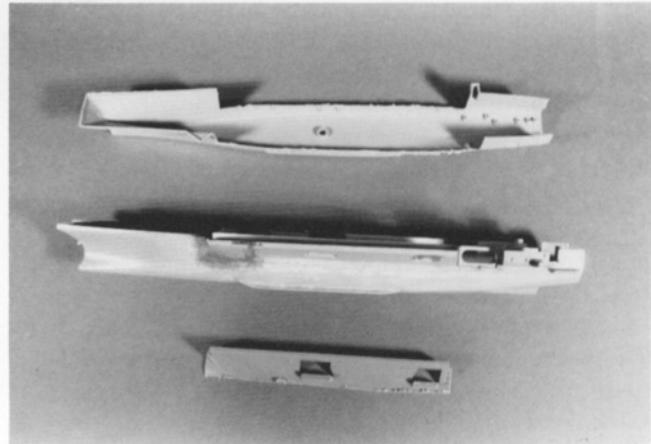
Before gluing the Monogram pieces to the Arii hull, check the fit to the flight deck from the Arii kit. There will be a small amount of difference with respect to how the elevator openings line up with the elevator locations in the flight deck. We cut the starboard piece just aft of the quarterdeck and again just forward of the number three elevator. We spliced a thin piece of plastic card (about 1/32nd of an inch) into the structure just forward of the number three elevator, and another piece (about 1/8th of



Major modifications to the starboard side are illustrated here. A large section of the hull is removed from the Arii kit, and the corresponding section must be removed from Monogram's model of the KENNEDY, seen in the background. Monogram's parts must then be glued in place on the Arii hull. The sponson for the forward Sea Sparrow launcher also comes from the Monogram kit, as does the hawsepope for the forward anchor. Many more corrections and conversions still need to be done before detailing begins.

an inch) just aft of the quarterdeck. We then fitted the entire new side into the Arii hull, and used a lot of Jet glue (or equivalent) and plastic dust for filler and strength. Since we were building AMERICA as she appears today, the sponson for the forward Sea Sparrow launcher was taken from the Monogram kit and glued in place on the hull. The stem hawsepope was cut away from the Monogram kit, then attached to the Arii hull. Once all of this dried, we sanded it down as smooth as possible, then filled, sanded, primed, then sanded again. The result was a smooth hull that looked like it came that way. The port side went much the same way, however we found that the piece we cut out from the Monogram kit was a little too long for the Arii flight deck. We cut out a one-half inch section from this piece just forward of the boat deck that is molded into it. With this section now removed, we glued the forward and aft pieces back together, then fitted them to the Arii hull. The opening for the number four elevator was lined up next to the sponson on the port quarter where the original Arii hull had been cut away. But since we had to shorten the part from the Monogram kit about one-half inch to get it to fit properly under the flight deck, there was now a half inch between forward end of this piece and the cut we had made in the Arii hull at the forward end. We filled this in with plastic card, added filler, then sanded, primed, filled, and sanded again.

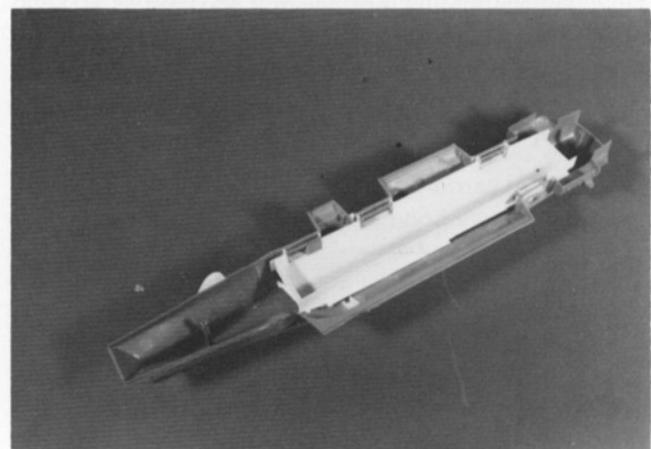
We decided to add a hangar deck from plastic card. This is a relatively simple task, and it will greatly enhance the final appearance of the model. The opening to each elevator at the hangar deck level is actually two oval-shaped openings, one inside the other. We used the elevator openings from the unused Arii pieces inside of the



The same thing must be done to the port side. A section must be removed from the forward angle in the supporting structure for the flight deck overhang all the way back to and including the number four elevator. The cutouts in the area under the overhang have yet to be modified, and the sponson for the forward port Phalanx mount must be added.

Monogram openings to get the proper effect. The photographs on pages 44 and 45 will help the modeler understand what we mean here.

The quarterdeck from the Monogram kit that is now in place on the hull is the correct rounded shape as far as the lower section is concerned, but the top half that supports the flight deck overhang is incorrect. It can be corrected with plastic card and the addition of ribs, but the one from the Arii (Otaki) EISENHOWER kit (part 74) could also be modified to work. The entrance to the quarterdeck could be opened up, and an interior can be built from plastic card. The large sponson under the superstructure can also be detailed. This could include opening up the boat deck and the refueling deck. Tiny wires, painted black, could be added to represent hoses inside, and the boats and davits are available from the Arii AMERICA kit.

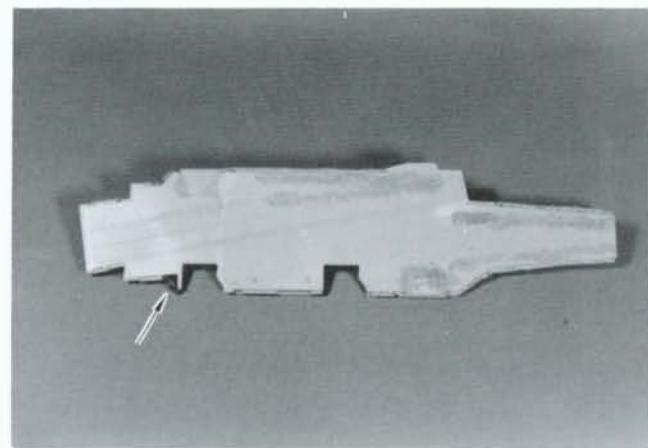


A hangar bay has been added to the model from plastic card and elevator openings from the removed Arii sections. The bow dome must be corrected, and many other modifications and corrections are yet to be made.

Antennas, the pyrotechnic and flammable lockers, and other smaller details can be added in this area using scrap plastic, wire, and other parts as the modeler desires. Around each elevator opening are small platforms, hoists, and other equipment. It's all a question of how much of this the modeler wants to add on his own, but photographs of all of these areas are included in this book. None of the kits have the correct supporting beams and structure beneath the elevators, so here is another place the builder can test his skills in scratch-building. Tiny slivers of plastic and wire are all that are needed to do the trick. On the starboard quarter, not much is necessary if the Terriers are to be used, but a lot of modification is necessary if the Sea Sparrow System is used. The ARII New ENTERPRISE kit will supply the launchers and radars, but cut the "knobs" off the tops of the launchers if the latest mark of the launcher is to be modeled. Supporting sponsons for the radars will have to be added from scratch.

Once the modeler is finished with this, there are a few more modifications needed before detailing can begin. The bow dome on the ARII kit is the wrong shape, and must be corrected. The correct shape is more like that on the Monogram kit, as evidenced by the lower left photograph on page 52. Remove the existing dome by cutting along the waterline about one inch back, then cut vertically down to the keel to remove the part. Replace this with a small wood block that can be carved and sanded to shape. The stabilizers on each side of the hull should not be flat underneath, but should have more of a long blade-like shape to them. The hole for the port anchor should be filled in since there is none on AMERICA. Another change that can be made to the port side at this time concerns the two large cutouts under the overhang. See page 56 for the shapes and sizes of these openings. Cut out the existing ones and reshape them using plastic card. It is simple to give these some depth and dimension while doing this, and a small whaleboat from the ARII AMERICA kit can be added to the boat deck.

The flight deck as it comes in the ARII kit is generally correct. A small area just aft of the number three elevator needs to be removed as shown in the photograph on this page. An overrun or horn for the Van Velm bridle catcher needs to be added to the overhang on the port side ahead of the numbers three and four catapults. The horn for the number two catapult may be removed or left in place depending on the time frame that the model is to represent. An LSO platform also needs to be added. Other details, like saluting guns and the fresnel lens system, should be added to the catwalks. Studying the photographs on pages 6, 36, and 37 should help when it comes to detailing and correcting the flight deck. Most aircraft carrier kits have trenches to represent the catapults, and this one is no exception. These are best filled in and sanded smooth. Light scribing can then replace the catapults more realistically. JBDs can be added from thin plastic card if they are to be shown in the raised position. The seam around any elevator that is assembled in the



The flight deck in the ARII kit is shown here. The black area just aft of the number three elevator must be removed, and other changes need to be made. The grooves for the catapults should be filled in and sanded smooth. The seams between the flight deck and any elevator that is assembled in the raised position should also be filled and sanded smooth.

raised position should be filled and sanded, then rescribed lightly. Otherwise there is too much of a gutter around the elevator. Some of the positions for the decals are also scribed into the deck. Sand these away since they detract from the model.

For AMERICA, the superstructure has to be practically built from scratch. Neither the one in the ARII kit nor the one in the Monogram kit even comes close to the unique superstructure found on AMERICA. KITTY HAWK and CONSTELLATION have their pri-flys located aft on a very narrow superstructure, but AMERICA's is forward above the bridges. Their smokestacks are rather large, while AMERICA's is a unique smaller stack. KENNEDY has a shorter, wider island with a unique slanted stack. The best place to start is with the base of the superstructure using plastic card. Refer to the photographs on pages 25, 26, and 40. It should be the same length as the one in the ARII kit, but about one-sixteenth of an inch wider. At the front it gets wider to starboard as it gets higher until it reaches the bridges. The bridges and pri-fly can be modified from parts in the two kits plus parts that are found in the ARII (or Otaki) kit of EISENHOWER. Other parts, such as the mast, radars, and the Phalanx weapon can be obtained from these kits and the ARII kit of the New ENTERPRISE (number A123-1200), which represents CVN-65 both before and after her modernization. The Phalanx gun systems in this kit appear to be too small, and we recommend using the Skywave 1/700th scale ships' parts found in kit number SW-300. These are a bit too large, but can be filed and sanded down to the proper size. Other parts, such as AMERICA's unique small smokestack, platforms, and walkways will have to be made from thin plastic card. It will take a little time and effort, but it is not quite as difficult as it may seem.

Aircraft for the air wing can be collected from all of the kits that we have mentioned. Just remember not to mix certain types of aircraft with others that were not assigned to the ship at the same time. For example, if you use A-7s, don't use F/A-18s unless your Hornet represents the prototype that conducted carrier qualifications aboard AMERICA. Another example would be not to use F-14s with F-4 Phantoms or with RA-5C Vigilantes. The RA-5Cs were gone by the time the F-14s and F/A-18s arrived.

The decals are another point to consider. While the decals are of a decent quality, they substitute orange for yellow in the center landing stripe and in the markings that go around the elevators. Deck markings are also quite incomplete. Most importantly, there are no red and white foul lines. A lot of this will have to be painted on by hand, but Gold Medal Models' decal sheet number 700-1D, Naval Ship Decals, will also be helpful. Write to Gold Medal Models, 12332 Chapman Avenue, Number 81, Garden Grove, California 92640, for more information.

The rest of the model's construction is simply a matter of selecting the time frame the model is to represent, then detailing it out. For example, the radar fit would be different for AMERICA during her combat tours in Vietnam than they would be today. Terrier missile launchers would be on the quarters if the model is to represent the ship up until her 1980 yard period, but Sea Sparrow missiles would be used if the model is to represent the carrier as she has appeared since then. The Terrier launchers and their radars are provided in the Arii kit that claims to be the AMERICA, and the Sea Sparrow launchers and radars can be obtained from Arii's New ENTERPRISE kit. The Phalanx guns can also come from this kit or from the Skywave kit as mentioned earlier. These were also added to the ship in 1980. Just remember that the aft Phalanx mount was originally on the port quarter, then was later moved to the fantail and its present location.

The best thing that the builder can do in detailing his model is to refer to the many pages in this book that cover AMERICA's details. Take it one section at a time, first referring to the photographs of that section and then building and detailing it to match the photographs. The next few paragraphs should be of help in this regard.

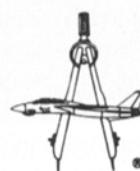
We will first begin with the starboard side of the hull and work aft. The anchors in the Arii kit will suffice. One should be placed on the stem hawsepope and the other to the starboard side as indicated for the kit (see page 52). If it is going to be used, the Sea Sparrow sponson should be taken from the Monogram kit, but don't use the deck that is supplied. Make a new one out of plastic card instead, and let it extend a little over the sponson, as shown in the photographs in this book. Railings from a photo-etched set for 1/700th or 1/720th scale ships can be cut down to make railings for it and for other places as needed on this model. The elevator openings have rounded fairings around them to reduce the effects of spray or waves in high seas. Study the photographs on pages 44 and 45, then add these as necessary from plastic card and filler.

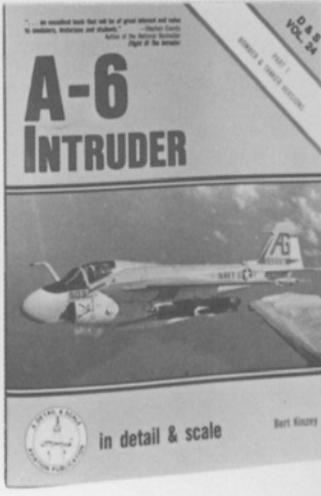
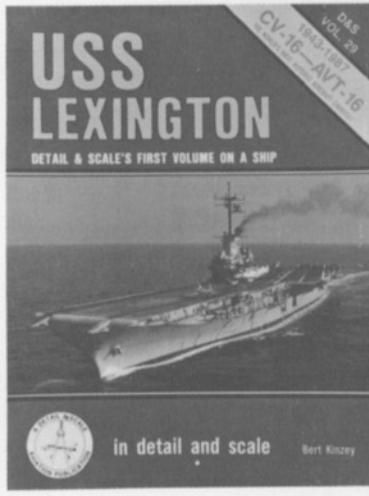
For example, one place this is needed is aft of the number three elevator at the bottom.

The port side will require a scratch-built sponson for the forward Phalanx system if the ship is to be represented in a post-1980 appearance. We know of no sponson that comes close to the real one, so scratch-building is about the only way to go. Moving aft, the next thing to consider are the two openings under the flight deck overhang. These were mentioned earlier, and can be seen in the photographs on page 56. Various communications and ECM antennas should be added along the flight deck, as should the fresnel lens. The situation with the sponson on the port quarter is the same as it was on the starboard side, and depends on the missile system (time frame) desired. It will be relatively simple if the Terriers are used, but will involve a lot of work if the Sea Sparrows are chosen. A small platform will have to be added to the extreme aft end of the port quarter above the one that is already there. It mounts the chaff launchers and two .50 calibre machine gun mounts shown on page 62.

The fantail will also require a lot of work. The sponson that projects out from it is not in the kit. It will have to be added from scratch. If appropriate, the Phalanx mount must also be added to it.

We have already covered the work that must be done to the flight deck and superstructure. Again, tiny parts can be used from the Arii kits of the AMERICA, New ENTERPRISE, and EISENHOWER to detail out the superstructure in particular. But the modeler should expect to do some scratch-building as well. No 1/800th scale kit has yet to include the small barrel-shaped life rafts that line the catwalks around the flight deck. They were added to AMERICA during her 1978 yard period. These must be cut from thin plastic rod or sprue and added individually. This will be a very time consuming and extremely tedious job that might result in a modeler ending up at the funny farm! It may seem like this is a lot of work to do to obtain a model that is in a very small scale, but the results can make the effort well worth it. The finished model will be an accurate representation of AMERICA, a carrier not found in many model collections. It will be an important addition to any collection of U.S. aircraft carriers, particularly when displayed with Arii/Otaki's other carriers in 1/800th scale. Although they are very small, they are generally quite good. Until a model manufacturer decides to build an accurate kit of AMERICA, this is the only way to build a model of her without doing it all from scratch!





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